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**ANARCHIVAL DANCE: CHOREOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES AND THE
DISRUPTION OF KNOWLEDGE**

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PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I declare that this doctoral thesis is my own work unless specifically stated otherwise in this text. It is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the PhD in the Faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town and has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university in South Africa or abroad.

Signed by candidate

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ABSTRACT

This thesis details a practice-led investigation of the archive, explored through choreography and the creation of three anarchival performances. The research theorises the anarchival as a creative research methodology for archival questioning and epistemological disruption, enacted through the body. Through a critically reflexive thinking-through of choreographic practice, alongside an interpretivist analysis of performance works by six contemporary South African artists, the thesis surfaces specific ways in which an anarchival disruption of the archive facilitates a re-thinking of colonially inherited knowledge systems, implicit in the archive. The research thus frames anarchival disruption within the broader decolonial project in South Africa as a necessary and valuable strategy for developing a decolonial archival praxis. Chapter One positions the archive in relation to poststructuralist and postcolonial critiques and establishes the archive as a system of knowledge production deeply implicated in the proliferation of colonial epistemologies and the subjugation of bodies and embodied ways of knowing. Chapter Two conceptualises the anarchival, through process philosophy and Deleuzian ontologies, as an alternative archive comprised of the virtual traces of the past that the traditional archive excludes. These traces constitute points of contact for creative research and, when engaged with through the body, become sites for recreation and reimagining. Chapters Three, Four and Five each explicate specific approaches to this encounter in creative practice, departing from three forms of archival remains: objects, bodies, and ghosts, respectively. The disruptive effects of these practices are then developed further through the analysis of specific performance works where related anarchival disruption is evident. Chapter Three considers affect as a disruptor of hierarchical divisions between subject and object in Steven Cohen's *Put your heart under your feet... and walk!/To Elu* (2017) and Dineo Seshee Bopape's *Sa koša ke lerole* (2017). Chapter Four analyses the blurring of past and present temporalities in Nelisiwe Xaba's *The Venus* (2009). In Chapter Five, Gavin Krastin's *Rough Musick* (2013), Sello Pesa's *Limelight on Rites* (2014) and Igshaan Adams' *Bismillah* (2014) are each examined as haunted temporalities where the living and the dead co-exist and affect one another.

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INTRODUCTION: POINTS OF DEPARTURE

The doctoral research detailed in this thesis stems from a practice-led investigation of the archive through the creation of choreographic archives. The research was conducted over a period of four years between 2015 and 2018, and occurred in, with and through my own body. During the research practice, three distinct creative processes were explored, each resulting in a solo performance, choreographed and performed by myself as the researcher. These research projects were performed on several occasions, in various locations (Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Makhanda)¹ and in different festival contexts (the National Arts Festival, The Cape Town Fringe, the Dance Umbrella and the ICA Live Art Festival).² As the basis for the research, both the choreographic process of creating each individual work as well as its sharing through public performance, inform and underpin the thinking offered here. This thesis thus presents an in-depth explication of a particular research methodology explored, in this instance, in relation to choreography, or more specifically, a choreographic engagement with the archive.

Context of the research and rationale

As a departure point for this project, the archive is recognised as a space that has been widely critiqued in diverse fields such as archive studies, poststructuralist philosophy, queer theory and postcolonial studies, as a particularly charged and contentious territory. As a literal territory, the archive can be understood as a *place* where memory and knowledge from the past are documented, stored and preserved. These archives are selective and curated – they do not contain all memory of all events across all time. Rather, archives are places that, historically, are predominantly concerned with the collection of material traces of the past (and only those objects and documents deemed worthy of preservation), which are then stored in vaults, cupboards, catalogues or online in digital repositories. To access these traces,

¹ Makhanda (formerly Grahamstown) is a small city located in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. It is the home of the National Arts Festival (NAF), a ten-day multi-art festival held annually in June/July since 1973.

² The Cape Town Fringe is a multi-art festival, affiliated with the NAF, held in Cape Town. Now defunct, the festival was held annually between 2014 and 2017. The Dance Umbrella is an annual festival of dance and live art, held in Johannesburg from 1988 to 2018. In 2019 the festival was reconceptualised as Dance Umbrella Africa and relocated to the State Theatre in Pretoria. The ICA Live Art Festival is a biennial interdisciplinary festival held in Cape Town since 2012, by the Institute for Creative Arts (ICA), an interdisciplinary institute associated with the University of Cape Town.

the researcher must arrive at the archive, as place, webpage or database, where access to its contents can be granted. Archives, importantly, are also *systems*. Poststructuralist thinkers, such as Michel Foucault (1972/1969) and Jacques Derrida (1995), have shown that the archive, and processes of archiving, do more than just store knowledge – that is, archives are also inherently epistemological – where the structures and methods of the archive as a system (a process Derrida (1995:10) calls “archivization”) also *shape* the nature of knowledge and *produce* knowledge.

This close correlation between the archive as a system and epistemology, arguably forms the cornerstone of much of the significant postcolonial and decolonial critique of the archive. In these critiques, the archive’s implication in Western-oriented, document-biased and logocentric knowledge systems, propagated around the world through Europe’s colonial project, is acknowledged as an oppressive force complicit in the subjugation of other indigenous epistemologies and ways of knowing. Diana Taylor’s *The archive and the repertoire: performing cultural memory in the Americas* (2003) presents one such critique, where Taylor meticulously identifies the role played by the colonial archive in establishing a disjuncture between “the *archive* of supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, document, buildings, bones) and the so-called ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge (i.e., spoken language, dance, sports, ritual)” (2003:19). By privileging material documentation over embodied ways of storing and transmitting memory, the archive, Taylor argues, devalues the body as a site of memory (the body-as-archive) and subjugates its unique ability to think and to know, differently. Similarly, the archive’s close association to colonialism and the diffusion of Western thinking into colonised locales (such as the Americas, Africa, Asia and Australasia) has further subjugated particular kinds of bodies as well as the histories, memories and ways of knowing connected to those bodies. Prominent postcolonial, subaltern studies and black studies theorists, such as Frantz Fanon (1986/1952), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (1986; 1998), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988), Achille Mbembe (2002; 2015; 2016), Fred Moten (2003; 2013), Anthony Bogues (2012) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) have widely noted the archive’s historical exclusion of black bodies and the silencing of their histories as a means to position colonised peoples outside of the “history of thought” (Bogues, 2012:34), as constructed by the colonial archive.

This capacity of the archive to exclude, subjugate and silence bodies and ways of knowing deemed 'other' has, in recent years, initiated a significant decolonial response, recognising the archive as a pivotal literal *and* epistemic space in need of substantial critique and, beyond this, radical redress and transformation. In South Africa, nationwide student protests, such as the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall movements, occurring on university campuses across the nation in 2015 and 2016, initiated a significant and turbulent "upsurge" (Nuttal, 2019:43) of decolonial questioning within South African university spaces. Grounded in "a politics of radical action" (Pather & Boule, 2019:2), these student-led movements called for the urgent and substantial decolonial transformation of curricula, of university spaces themselves, and of those teaching and learning pedagogies and methodologies privileged in the academy.

In *Decolonizing methodologies* (2012), Tuhiwai Smith suggests that "revisiting history" is a "significant part of decolonization" (2012:35), because without redressing the colonial archive's construction of the past, previously colonised peoples remain trapped in the "colonial experience" (2012:35). As such, the archive, its histories and its proclivity to subjugate bodies and ways of knowing associated with the body, need to be revisited and re-imagined as a move toward "transforming our colonized views of our own history (as written by the West)" (2012:36). For the postcolonial or decolonial scholar, revisiting the archive (as both a place and a system) thus becomes a multi-layered task. Beyond the critiquing of historical documents, testimonies, artefacts and recordings, where the researcher must read between the lines in order to see what is *not* written and what ideologies, prejudices and violences underpin what *is* written, the decolonial researcher must also seek out what the archive, on the surface, cannot hold, or what the archive holds *unintentionally* – the invisible traces and ghosts of the excluded, or what wa Thiong'o refers to as "silence that screams" (1998:28).

As much as archives are concerned with material traces of the past or, as Foucault has argued, with "moments" in time that have been transformed into "monuments" (1972/1969:7), the archive is, simultaneously, a haunted space. As both a place and a system, the archive is surrounded by, and imbued with, spectral traces of the dead – ghostly absent presences that are assumed into the archive alongside and beneath the materialities it collects and contains. The ghost in this instance, as Avery Gordon has thoroughly explicated, "is not

simply a dead or a missing person,” but also “something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes [that] makes itself known or apparent to us, in its own way” (Gordon, 2008:8). Janice Radway notes that an engagement with the ghost facilitates a “knowing that is more a listening than a seeing, a practice of being attuned to the echoes and murmurs of that which has been lost but which is still present among us” (Radway, 2008:x). Archives are thus hauntological (in a Derridean sense), deeply embroiled in “a politics of memory, of inheritance and of generations” (Derrida, 1994:xix) where past presences, ideas, concepts, ideologies, belief systems and epistemologies remain, surreptitiously, in trace-form and thus haunt the present moment. For the postcolonial or decolonial scholar, the spectral traces of “the destroyed archive” (Mbembe, 2002:24) of excluded bodies and subjugated knowledges within the archive, become important points of contact in the pursuit of archival redress, historical revisitation and decolonial reimagining.

From this understanding, it becomes clear that the archive of objects and so-called documentable ‘facts’, complicit in colonialism’s subjugation of bodies and knowledges, also has a foil – an alternative archive comprised of the invisible traces, spectres and absent presences of past moments, ideas, thoughts and bodies. Deleuzian scholar and performance theorist, Brian Massumi (2016a), amongst others, describes this alternative archive as the ‘Anarchive’. Drawing from process philosophy and the ideas of thinkers such as Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and Alfred North Whitehead, Massumi conceptualises the anarchive as a “repertory of traces” (2016a:6). Unlike the archive, the anarchive, Massumi suggests, is never a place and is never documentation. Rather, the anarchive is the “excess energy of the archive” and its documentation, comprised of “formative tendencies; compositional forces seeking new taking-form; lures for further process” (2016a:7). Importantly, these excess energies and traces, Massumi explains, are not inert – they are “carriers of potential” (2016a:6) that function to “trigger new events which continue the creative process from which they came, but in a new iteration” (2016a:6). In this way, the anarchive is not about *preserving* memory and knowledge of the past but, rather, with *creation*, as “something to be performed” (Massumi, 2016b:47). As a repertory of traces, the anarchive is concerned specifically with virtual traces of the past, which become potentialities for different kinds of processes, manifestations or actualisations when engaged with in the future.

Massumi thus locates the anarchival in line with Deleuze's distinction between the virtual and the actual. In Deleuze's *Bergsonism* (1991/1988), he develops an understanding of virtuality based on that of philosopher, Henri Bergson (1991/1896). For Deleuze, virtualities and actualities describe a distinction between things that are equally real but exist in different forms. While actualities are real, they also have concrete existence and material form. Virtualities, on the other hand, do not have concrete form but do still "possess a reality" (Deleuze, 1991/1988:96). A further important distinction Deleuze makes is that virtualities do not presuppose their transformation into actualities – that is, a virtual something is not an abstract, pre-existing essence of a not-yet-formed actuality. Deleuze suggests: "The characteristic of virtuality is to exist in such a way that it is actualized by being differentiated" where "the rules of actualization are not those of resemblance and limitation, but those of difference and divergence and of creation" (1991/1988:97). In this way, a virtual trace is understood as something that is real and exists without concrete form but that has the potential to be actualised, to take form, in a multiplicity of different ways because the actual "does *not* resemble the virtuality that it embodies" (1991/1988:97). Returning to the context of the anarchival, the virtual traces contained within the anarchival, as a repertory, can be understood as potential springboards for countless different archival actualisations, where the traces of past presences are opened to revisitation and reimagining through creative processes that seek new, differentiated taking-forms.

Massumi's thinking around the anarchival resonates in some ways with what Ann Cvetkovich (2003) has theorised, from a queer theory perspective, as the 'Archive of Feelings'. As a queer archive, the Archive of Feelings, Cvetkovich argues, fills a gap created by the traditional archive's exclusion of gay and lesbian bodies and their experiences which, she suggests, are intricately linked to emotion and feeling and the embodied, affective experience of trauma. Cvetkovich explains: "[L]esbian and gay history demands a radical archive of emotion in order to document intimacy, sexuality, love, and activism – all areas of experience that are difficult to chronicle through the materials of a traditional archive" (2003:241). Like the anarchival, the queer archive of feelings thus recognises the archival value of emotion and corporeal experience and the lack of these in traditional archival practices. As Sara Edenheim (2014:39) notes, however, Cvetkovich's archive is conceptualised as being actual rather than virtual and concerns the incorporation of ephemera connected to feeling, such as objects,

narrated experiences and “community records” (2014:39), as an additive measure to the archive. While both the anarchive and the archive of feelings privilege embodied traces and experience, the anarchive is conceptualised specifically through virtuality and thus concerns un-actualised traces of past experiences and affects *before* emotion and feeling.

Andrè Lepecki has noted this reimagining of virtual traces in the specific context of the dance archive and contemporary choreography. In his paper, *The body as archive: will to re-enact and the afterlives of dances* (2010), Lepecki observes and describes an approach to the re-enactment of past dances, evident in the work of several contemporary choreographers, where choreographic re-enactment is not concerned with restaging a work in the same way, in a different time, with the same intentions. Instead, Lepecki suggests, these artists seek to identify in past dances “still non-exhausted creative fields of ‘impalpable possibilities’” (2010:31) where the approach to the re-enactment of past dances is guided by a desire to “unlock, release, and actualize a work’s many (virtual) com- and impossibilities” (2010:31). Drawing from Deleuzian notions of virtuality, Lepecki recognises that, in the context of the dance archive, past dances continue to hold unactualised, virtual possibilities which, when engaged with by other choreographers, present unique opportunities for past dances to be re-enacted and reimagined in vastly different ways. Beyond this, Lepecki suggests, these dances, created through an encounter with archival traces of the past, have the capacity not only to create *reimagined* expressions of past works but to surface *new* thoughts and ideas “which the originating instantiation of the work kept in reserve” (2010:31).

When viewed through the perspective of virtuality and the anarchive, the charged and contentious territory of the archive becomes, I suggest, simultaneously a space of potential and possibility. For the researcher who is concerned more with the archive’s silences, gaps and ghosts than with its historical documents and facts, and who seeks to know those histories, memories and knowledges that the archive strives to exclude or keep hidden, the anarchive of virtual traces presents a space in which significant questioning of the archive can occur. Conceived as virtualities, archival traces also become ontogenic when engaged with by the creative researcher – that is, the trace of something that once *was*, as I will argue, is simultaneously a potentiality for something *else*, for other possibilities, through its creative reimagining and re-actualisation. In this way, the anarchive offers the researcher a space in which to creatively question the archive, as a system of storing and producing knowledge,

while also producing and creating different, new reiterations and manifestations of archival traces.

Focus of the research

This project is thus located, broadly, in the field of archive studies with a particular focus on the relationship between performance and the archive, considered from a decolonial perspective. As a point of departure, the research recognises (after Taylor), the historical rift established through colonialism between the body and the archive, and between logocentric, document-biased epistemologies and embodied, performative ways of knowing. By engaging with the archive, critically, through performance and the body, the research seeks to explore this historical rift and surface some of the ways in which a notably anarchival approach to the archive might initiate a different kind of thinking about the past, its archival traces and the effect of these traces when engaged with, creatively, through the body.

Rather than replicating this rift between the body and the archive, the research explored here considers both the archive and the body-as-archive as sources of memory and knowing. As such, the virtual traces of the past that are seen to haunt the archive, similarly haunt the body-as-archive, positioning the body as a site for anarchival questioning. Archival remains are thus recognised within this research in line with Rebecca Schneider's understanding: "To find the past resident in remains – material evidence, haunting trace, reiterative gesture – is to engage one time resident in another time" (2011:37). In a similar way, archival remains are understood within this project as multiplicitous; extending beyond the tangible artefacts and documents of the past (contained in literal archives) to include the 'reiterative gestures' of the body-as-archive and the 'haunting traces' of the past which remain, virtually, in both body and material object.

Within the broader field of performance practice, the research considers an anarchival engagement with the archive through the specific practice of choreography. The focus on the creation of choreographic archives emerges from my own artistic practice, which I would describe as choreographic in nature. The understanding of choreography in this instance aligns with notably open, contemporary understandings of the term, most thoroughly expounded by Lepecki (2006; 2008) and Bojana Cvejić (2015). Both authors recognise a pronounced

disjuncture between 'choreography', as a term historically relating to the spatio-temporal writing with the body through a system of command, and 'dance', as a stylistically and/or socio-culturally coded art form involving the moving body. In my understanding, choreography is conceived as an act of *composition* rather than a system of command, and can occur without the performance of movement socio-culturally recognisable as dance, or where 'dance' is understood to refer to all manner of movement possibilities, from the functional to the expressive, the pedestrian to the virtuosic. Choreography, in this instance, is thus inclusive of a wide range of (inter)disciplinary, artistic and/or performative texts and actions.

In her book, *Choreographing problems: expressive concepts in European contemporary dance and performance* (2015), Cevjić proposes the term "choreographic performances" (2015:11) as a means to differentiate work by artists operating in the realms of contemporary dance, live art, performance art and contemporary performance, whose work is choreographic in approach but not necessarily *dance*. She explains,

As choreographies, these works aren't enclosed within the composition of the body and/or movement exclusively, but instead expand to include whatever expression arises in their making. Thus, they are nominally aligned with the discipline 'dance' through historical residues of movement and the human body, but factually they are indeterminate and heterogeneous: the bodies and/or movement can be composed with expression from any other art or non-art. (Cvejić, 2015:11)

In a similar manner, the understanding of 'anarchival dance' and 'choreographic archives' within this research project (as indicated in its title) is informed by this awareness and, as such, refers to and considers practices, artists and performance works that are choreographic in approach but operate, or exist, within a range of interdisciplinary styles and forms, outside of narrow definitions of what it might mean to dance.

Beyond my own choreographic practice, it is also appropriate to consider the anarchival through the specific context of the choreographic since the act of choreography itself, and its implication of the body, presents a distinct *way into* the archive, when understood, from a poststructuralist perspective, as a system. Lepecki has similarly recognised the body and choreography as ideal entry points for archival investigation. He asks: "How can we access the archive, enter the archive, if the archive is not a 'storehouse' ... but a system? The answer is: only choreographically. For if choreography knows something, it is that an

archive does not store: it acts” (Lepecki, 2010:37-38). In this way, choreography, as an embodied act of doing, is able to engage with the archive through and with the body, where *thinking* can emerge in the active encounter between the body and archive and the body-as-archive.

This capacity for performance and the body to think and produce thought also positions this research project within the interrelated fields of performance-philosophy and affect theory (as it relates to philosophy). Laura Cull describes performance-philosophy as an emerging field of study that is grounded in the understanding that performance constitutes “its own kind of thinking” (2012a:3). Cull distinguishes this from more commonplace intersections between performance practice, performance studies and philosophy, where performance is used analytically to illustrate or exemplify philosophical concepts, or where philosophical concepts are directly applied to performance practice. Performance-philosophy, Cull contends, recognises the ability of performance and all of its (nonhuman) elements to think in and of themselves, and in ways that can sometimes be separate and distinct from the research intentions of the artist-researcher.

Mark Fleishman has similarly argued the capacity of performance to think and has suggested that, as an epistemology, performance “constitutes an alternative way of knowing particularly appropriate to Africa” (2009:133). Fleishman contends:

Knowing performance, not in the sense of ‘knowing about’ but more importantly in the sense of ‘knowing with, through, or by means of’ has the potential to transform knowledge production by closing the gap between subject and object, between body and mind, between the academy and society. (2009:133)

Fleishman thus positions performance, when understood as epistemological, as “an ongoing interruption that disturbs any easy assumption about what knowledge is and how it should be practiced” (2009:133). When located in relation to the archive, performance becomes, as this thesis will demonstrate, a means through which to think differently about the past and, furthermore to actively ruminate on the possibilities of alternate futures in a specifically corporeal way, outside of inherited Platonic and Cartesian dualities governing knowledge.

Within performance-philosophy, affect theory also provides a useful theoretical framework in which to consider the body and its disruptive positionality as a knowing and knowledge-producing entity. As Massumi notes: “When I think of my body and ask what it

does to earn that name, two things stand out. It *moves*. It *feels*" (2002:1). From the perspective of affect theory, rather than defining the body only in terms of its represented or identitarian being (what it looks like as a gendered, racial or socio-cultural human subject), the body also becomes ontologically defined by its ability and *potential* to both experience and elicit change – to move, and be moved, and to feel and be felt. Affect plays a central role in this understanding of the body's being. In the introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's highly influential *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia* (1987/1980), Massumi clarifies affect as a virtual force that is felt by the body, and is thus real, but is distinct from emotion and feeling. Unlike emotions, which Massumi argues, are personal and subjectively and socially constructed, affects are "prepersonal intensities" (Massumi, 1987:xvi) that are experienced directly by the body *before* subjectivity. Affects can, however, be precursors to feelings or emotions which manifest, or actualise, once a subject makes sense of, or interprets, the embodied experience of affect. When choreographically engaging with and performing archival traces, the body is thus also engaging with affect, which, I will argue, becomes a key component in conceptualising how the body thinks, differently, and how it can be seen to disrupt established archival knowledge systems.

My engagement with affect theory in this research project is thus informed predominantly by Massumi and his theorising of Deleuzian and Deleuzoguattarian philosophy (after Baruch Spinoza). It is important to acknowledge that it is not my intention in this research to position these (notably white, Western, male) philosophies as globally applicable nor integral to the current decolonial project within contemporary South African art and performance. I acknowledge that Deleuzian philosophy has, in the past, been notably criticised, particularly by Alice Jardine (1984), from a feminist perspective, and Spivak (1988), from a postcolonial perspective, because of its focus on postidentitarian politics which, both theorists have argued, continue to privilege and centralise the Western male perspective as subject.³ Without negating the complexities of my own identity (as a white, queer, male of European descent) and of identity politics in general, I engage with Deleuzian thought in this research as a means to further explicate the specific ways in which affect and the body have already been widely theorised in other contexts and locales. I thus concur with Simone Bignall

³ See Cull (2012a:3-21) and Bignall & Patton (2010) for developed explanations of these critiques. For a response to Spivak's critique see Robinson & Tormey (2010).

and Paul Patton when they suggest that “many of Deleuze’s philosophical writings, both alone and with Guattari, develop concepts and frameworks of discussion that resonate with themes and issues pertinent to postcolonialism” (2010:3). My intention is thus to apply and draw from certain, relevant aspects of Deleuzian thought as a means to provide deeper insight into the potentials of performance as a kind of alternative philosophy connected to a rethinking of the archive and, specifically, of colonially inherited epistemologies which privilege representational paradigms and which the archive both produces and stores.

Intention of the research and key objectives

By engaging with the above-mentioned areas of research, the overarching aim of this project is to surface the specific ways in which an anarchival disruption of the archive through choreography might facilitate a re-thinking of the knowledge systems, implicit in the archive, within the broader decolonial project in South Africa. This research intention forms the basis of the foundational embodied research, explored through choreographic practice, and underpins the critical reflection and thinking-through of this practice as well as the analysis of case studies, contained in this thesis. Through this central aim it is my intention to elucidate the potentials of an anarchival approach to the archive as a strategy that might contribute toward future understandings of a “decolonial archival praxis” (Ghaddar & Caswell, 2019:71). While it is not my position that the anarchival is itself intrinsically decolonial, the research does argue for significant decolonial potential and value in the anarchival as a disruptive creative research methodology.

Towards realising this central aim, the project seeks to achieve the following four objectives:

1. To conceptualise the anarchival and its relationship with the archive by theoretically locating the anarchival in relation to relevant philosophical concepts and discourses.
2. To clearly identify and reflect upon specific engagements with an anarchival methodology within a personal research practice as a means to think-through and deepen an understanding of what anarchival choreography might be, how it might emerge and what it might do.

3. To theorise some of the ways in which anarchival exploration can be seen to disrupt established knowledge systems and to understand how an anarchival approach to choreography might initiate its own alternative thinking.
4. To analyse works by several South African performance artists as a means to identify and examine the potential effects of anarchival disruption of the archive and established knowledge systems in a wider context, beyond personal practice.

Methodology

In order to properly address and achieve these aims and objectives, the project and its summation in this written document maintains a close correlation to its framing as a practice-led research endeavour. In this project the understanding of practice is extended beyond the embodied processes of creative or performative exploration to include the practice of *writing* that has resulted in this thesis. Resonating with Robin Nelson's notion of "intelligent practice", where "theory and practice are rather imbricated within each other in praxis" (2013:62), this explication represents a thinking-through of embodied research practices (occurring in rehearsal and performance spaces) which are explored further, and differently, through the embodied acts of writing, theorising, reflecting and analysing (occurring on the computer screen and the page).

The findings, observations and assertions offered in this written summation are thus the result of the combined practice of making and writing in conjunction with theoretical research and the interpretative analysis of key texts, both published and performed. As Erin Manning, in *The minor gesture* warns: "Thought must not be mapped onto practice: it is an emergent, incipient tendency to be discovered in the field of activation of practices co-composing" (2016a:41). In a similar way, the practices of making and writing in this thesis have co-composed each other, each giving thought and clarity to the other, positioning the practice of writing as "an act, alive with the rhythms of uncertainty and the openings of a speculative pragmatism" rather than that which "describes, orients [and] defends" (2016a:42). This particular framing of practice within the project recognises that thought emerges, and thinking occurs, within both layers of practice as well as in their combining. This document is thus not intended as a report that details and clarifies findings discovered in embodied performance practices, but rather constitutes the continuation of these processes and their

thinking through the embodied act of writing. In this sense, the observations and ideas regarding an anarchival approach to choreography are the result of both layers of practice, where the understanding and awareness of a methodology have emerged through the dual processes and doings.

In conducting the first layer of practice (performance-making), three different creative research processes were explored, each departing from a different understanding of an archival remain – object, body, and ghost. The three works, which collectively constitute a trilogy, are titled *Detritus for one* (2015), *Sacre for one* (2016) and *Ghostdance for one* (2017).⁴ All three processes are methodologically framed as “body-centred research” (Parker-Starbuck & Mock, 2011:210), where the body of the researcher is positioned as the primary medium through which understanding and meaning emerge. This focus on the body as an experiential and thinking entity does not, importantly, negate the subjectivity of the body of the specific researcher, which, as Jennifer Parker-Starbuck and Roberta Mock note, remains “materially and culturally specific” (2011:211).

Each creative process has then been re-engaged through the second layer of practice (writing) as a means to consider the thinking of each work, differently, in relation to existing theories and discourses or in comparison to related performance works by other South African artists. This relationship is replicated through the structure of the discussion that follows, where each of the three performance processes become springboards for further focused consideration of the anarchival through the analysis of other creative works as case studies. Unlike my own practice, many of these other works were not necessarily created with the intention of engaging with anarchival processes and emerge, instead, from a variety of other intentions, themes and questionings relative to the originating artists. As such, any observed archival or anarchival propensities in the works, may or may not be intended or desired by the artists themselves. My consideration of these case studies thus acknowledges that each work was created with different originating intentions and that my observations of anarchival processes emerge through an interpretivist engagement with performance as “art that thinks” (Koložsvári & Morales, 2016:10).

⁴ Archival recordings of these works, in performance, are available for viewing online. Links to these works, as well as other performances cited in this thesis, are provided (where possible) in the Addendum: List of performance works cited by title.

Research contribution and value

The research, as both a practice-based endeavour and a written explication, seeks to contribute to existing knowledge and thinking in the particular fields/areas of archive studies, performance practice and performance-philosophy. By layering these three areas of research in relation to each other, the project surfaces important connections and common disruptive potentialities emergent when archives, bodies and epistemologies collide. Value, I suggest, arises from the consideration of these collisions from a uniquely dualist position that is both practical (from the perspective of the artist, performer and maker) as well as analytical (of the outside researcher looking in). As Arturo Escobar suggests, “[T]he *practice of transformation* really takes place in the process of enacting other worlds/practices – that is, in changing radically the ways in which we encounter things and people, not just theorizing about such practice” (2017:99, italics in original). In this way, this project contributes to knowledge concerning the anarchive and the reimagining of archival traces through embodied performance by providing both a practical exposition, rooted in *doing*, alongside a thorough theoretical conceptualising.

Similarly, the dual examination of an extensive performance practice related to self, alongside the artistic practices of several South African contemporary performance artists, contributes to deeper understandings of archival disruption through performance by providing for the reader, detailed examples and visible instances of how creative embodied research might initiate and achieve archival questioning. While it is not the intention of this research to provide models or prototypes for archival questioning through choreography, by explicating the specific choreographic processes and strategies explored within this project, the research does explicitly illustrate and evidence detailed applications of this strategy while simultaneously recognising a multiplicity of other kinds of potential applications and other possible outcomes. For the artist pursuing archival research through creative practice and through the body, this thesis arguably provides valuable insight into the many theoretical frameworks, philosophies, discourses and embodied practices pertinent to the field and becomes a way in which artists and researchers can deepen their own understanding of practices they might already be engaging with in their own creative processes.

In the particular field of archive studies, the research also contributes to current considerations relating to “decolonial archival praxis” (Ghaddar & Caswell, 2019:71) by approaching the critique of the archive through performance and, more specifically, through the body’s engagement with archival virtualities in an encounter that is grounded in creation. Archive theorists J.J. Ghaddar and Michelle Caswell, have noted a dire need for “an openness to epistemic diversity” (2019:80) within archive theory and practices, and suggest the urgent necessity for “alternative approaches that engage and incorporate ideas, insights and critiques from the literature and bodies of knowledge outside [this] field” (2019:80-81). This thesis and project, I suggest, can be seen as one such ‘alternative approach’ that develops current understandings of archival theory and practice by surfacing the practical potentials of archival traces as virtual springboards for the creation of difference and alterity when approached through performance.

The research also adds, I suggest, to recent conceptualisings of performance-philosophy through both the embodied practice of the research in performance, and the written analyses. The three works created during the research process, and the reflection on these in conjunction with the case studies, explicitly establishes clear, perceivable connections between broader, theoretical discourses regarding the archive and epistemologies and the *in situ* questioning of these in current South African performance practice. The research thus evidences and examines the myriad ways in which anarchival engagements with the archive and its various knowledges have been, and continue to be, prevalent in the thinking of several local performance works and performance-makers. In this way, the research can be seen to peel back a proverbial layer in order to reveal the practical ways in which performances *think* and bodies *ponder*.

Structure of the thesis

Towards the consideration of an anarchival choreographic research methodology, the thesis departs from the charged territory of the archive. In Chapter One, ‘Knowing and the archive’, I provide an extended context and theoretical overview of the archive as both a place and a system, and consider key poststructuralist and postcolonial critiques of the archive and its inculcation with colonially-inherited epistemologies. In Chapter Two, ‘Conceptualising the anarchival’, I offer a comprehensive conceptualising of the anarchival as a creative research

methodology. This framework is formed by drawing together several Deleuzian and Deleuzoguattarian concepts relating to deterritorialisation, becoming, and micropolitics, as well as theories by Deleuze-inspired performance theorists such as Massumi, Manning and Cvejić, which are then applied to my particular creative research practice. The concept of 'micropractice' is introduced and explored as a particular research strategy for archival processes, located in each of the three performance-making practices comprising this project. These individual micropractices are then introduced, framed and contextualised within the broader project.

Chapters Three, Four and Five collectively detail the two layers of combined practice, articulated earlier, where the thinking-through of micropractice becomes a springboard for discussion and analysis of key concepts beyond the realm of personal process. Chapter Three positions the archival object (in conversation with memory) as a departure point for archival investigation, located in the process of creating *Detritus for one*, which is detailed in Part 1 of this chapter. Part 2 considers affect as an emergent virtuality resulting from a choreographic engagement with the archival object and examines the role of affect as a disruptor of established knowledge systems. This is discussed through an analysis of Steven Cohen's *Put your heart under your feet...and walk!/To Elu* (2017) and Dineo Seshee Bopape's interactive installation, *Sa koša ke lerole* (2017).

The body-as-archive is positioned as the departure point for investigative micropractice in Chapter Four, where processes of archival re-enactment are discussed in relation to the second solo work, *Sacre for one*. In this chapter the performing body is considered as a point of convergence, between bodies and gestures from the past, re-enacted through the body in the present. Part 2 of this chapter then explores 'reaching (back) toward' as a choreographic, minoritarian gesture enacted towards past bodies as a means to know differently. The chapter concludes with an analysis of Nelisiwe Xaba's canonical performance work, *The Venus* (2009), re-considered through the lens of reaching-back.⁵

Chapter Five develops an understanding of the ghost as a virtual trace of the dead, which can be seen to haunt both body-as-archive and archival object. As a departure point for

⁵ *The Venus* is a collective title used to refer to two separate solo performances created by Xaba: *They look at me and that's all they think* (2006) and *Sakhozi says NON to the Venus* (2008).

anarchival investigation, the ghost is considered, in this instance, through the context of inherited cultural ritual, where ritualistic or ritualising behaviours are positioned as holders of ghostly traces. The discussion departs from the process of creating and performing *Ghostdance for one* and concludes, in Part 2, with an analysis of Gavin Krastin's *Rough Musick* (2013), Sello Pesa's *Limelight on Rites* (2014) and Igshaan Adams' *Bismillah* (2014). The analysis of these works is guided by Joseph Roach's (1996) identification of 'Effigy' as an embodied performance practice where the ghosts of the dead are able to speak through, and with, the bodies of the living.

In concluding the discussion, I return to the aforementioned research aims and objectives and clarify for the reader several key aspects of the overall research as well as the research's perceived contribution. I now turn directly to the archive, and chart the intersecting territories of archival discourse, thereby planting the seedbed from which an anarchival process might grow.

CHAPTER ONE: KNOWING AND THE ARCHIVE

In her paper, *Theories of the archive from across the disciplines*, Marlene Manoff suggests that “all scholarship is implicitly a negotiation with, an interpretation of, and a contribution to the archive” (2004:13). Manoff articulates in this statement the close relationship between the archive, as that which both stores and produces knowledge of the past, and the pursuit, production and discovery of new knowledge or understandings in the present. By this logic, in order for ideas, concepts, mythologies or cosmologies to develop further, or for already discovered skills and techniques to be improved in the future, they need to be transmitted through time, passed down as it were, from one generation to the next. Peter Burke, in his two-volume investigation into knowledge, *A social history of knowledge*, notes: “The most obvious and widespread form of information retrieval is human memory, but its limits and fallibility have provoked a long series of attempts to supplement it with artificial aids” (2012:109). These aids to memory are quintessentially archival and occur in both material and embodied forms. In a material sense, artefacts of the past are collected and saved so that they can be made available to later generations, where material objects serve as reminders to initiate the memory of a particular practice or idea. Similarly, writing and other forms of graphic recording (such as drawings, etchings, paintings, sculptures and filmic recording) create material traces of otherwise remembered events by documenting a version, or perspective, of the occurrence through visual representation or written description.

In *Archive fever* (1995), Derrida describes this drive to create archival aids to memory as being rooted in a “compulsive, repetitive and nostalgic desire for the archive” (1995:91). Through a psychoanalytic interpretation of the concept of archive, Derrida establishes a link between Freud’s notion of the ‘Death Drive’ and this ‘Archive Drive’ where the need to record, save and document memory becomes, simultaneously, a destruction of memory itself (as embodied event or lived experience). Derrida’s understanding of the archive in this instance is informed by Foucault’s poststructuralist theorising of the archive in *The archaeology of knowledge* (1972/1969), where he defines the archive not only as a place or building for artefact preservation, but also, “the general system of formation and transformation of statements,” where “moments” are transformed into “documents” and where documents become “monuments” of the past (1972/1969:7).

Through the archival system these monuments become reified as official memory, thus functioning to replace memory rather than merely aiding in its remembering. Foucault observes in this process of transformation a power dynamic, particularly within Western knowledge systems, where the written document becomes privileged over memory and where the authoritative statement is privileged over the event, in time. In this way, Foucault argues, the archive creates a possibility of cultural definition, deciding through inclusion and exclusion within the archive, what is worthy of being remembered (what qualifies as valuable knowledge) and what should be forgotten or discarded (relegated to the supposed void of fallible memory). Foucault's understanding of the archive as a system and its role in knowledge creation and preservation reveals the non-objectivity of the archive and its implication in the destruction of memory through archival transformation.

It is through this process of destroying memory by supplanting it with archival documents, Derrida suggests, that the archive is revealed as a system of control for those in political dominance. Those in power are able to use the archive as a means through which to control history by establishing official histories, which are sanctified by the archive and its assumed authority over memory. Derrida contends: "There is no political power without control of the archive, if not memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation" (1995:9). Derrida's theorising of the archive thus reveals the underlying power implicit in archiving which, beyond creating aids to memory, inevitably works to replace and regulate memory through its shaping of history and its construction of knowledge. As Manoff suggests, "One of Derrida's most valuable contributions is his elaboration of the notion that the structure of the archive determines what can be archived and that history and memory are shaped by the technical methods of ... 'archivization'" (2004:12). With its insistence on documents and logocentric renderings of memory, the archive effectively excludes as much knowledge as it seeks to record and, in its replacing of memory with document, propagates a system of knowledge that reifies the written over the embodied and establishes clear distinctions between official, state-regulated or institutional knowledge, which erroneously claim objectivity and authority, and supposedly untrustworthy, fallible or subjective knowledge outside of the archive.

Beyond this logocentric capturing of memory through documentation and recording, the body is also implicated in the archival desire to create aids to memory. The codifying and choreographing of behaviours and actions, through ritual, the creation of specific techniques or the socio-cultural framing of daily performativities, similarly enables embodied knowledges to be taught and learned as disciplines and thus transferred from one body to another, creating a genealogy of behaviour connecting bodies across time. In a similar manner, orature, as the oral and performative transmission of memory through storytelling and learned behaviour (wa Thiong'o, 1998:117), becomes an additional embodied method for passing knowledge from one generation to the next through the narrativisation of events, mythologies and understandings gleaned in one time, for use and reference in another time. This implication of the body, its actions and its behaviours in the propagation of knowledge and memory is also, like the written archive, an act of oppression and control. Described by Foucault as "history's destruction of the body" (1984:83), the positioning of the body as that which can hold, absorb and be "imprinted by history" (1984:83) requires that the body submit to socio-cultural forces outside of it that regulate its patterns of movement and behaviour as a means to pass these on into the future. This disciplining of the body and its behaviours results from a kind of social choreography that demands, as Lepecki aptly describes, "a yielding to commanding voices of masters (living and dead) ... submitting body and desire to disciplining regimes" (2006:9).

While Foucault understands this process as something done *to* the body, where the body is the subject of inscription, Judith Butler (1999) has argued that the oppressive inscribing and choreographing of the body's performativity is, and has always been, an oppression in which the body actively participates, becoming both agent and subject of processes of inscription. Butler argues that the performativity of the body, in terms of how it behaves, moves and operates in space and society, is the result of an unwilling conditioning and conforming that the body undergoes and within which each body actively participates. This choreographing of the body's performativity can be understood as a kind of writing or inscription, where the body becomes a surface that is written upon and marked, by history, by society and by culture, and where its gestures, behaviours and embodied performativities become the physical expressions of this scribing. Lepecki (2008:1) has, for instance, observed this association between writing and the choreography of the moving body implicit in the

word 'choreography' itself which combines 'choreo' (movement) and 'graph' (writing) to establish a term describing a process understood as 'writing with movement.'

Whether material or embodied, these aids (or replacements) to memory ultimately determine the knowledge base of a particular group of people. This basis does not necessarily concern *what* a society knows, but rather, *how* a society might think and, more so, *how* knowledge is uniquely understood in a particular time and space. In this sense knowledge is fundamentally social, spatial and temporal, and concerns the particular ways "in which different groups of people acquire, process, spread and employ knowledge" (Burke, 2012:11). As Burke suggests, however: "Every dominant body of knowledge is shaped in part by what it excludes or suppresses" (2012:139). In this way, the process of storing and developing knowledge is always simultaneously a process of also rejecting, subjugating and losing knowledge as well. Specific cultures and societies are thus structured by what knowledge is accepted, and thus remembered, and what falls prey to what Burke calls "structural amnesia" (2012:139), where knowledge deemed useless in a particular time or locale is cast aside, or "cultural selection" (2012:149), where 'old' knowledges are discarded (literally, from archives, curricula, encyclopaedias, but also metaphorically, from memory) in order to make room for the new. This constant, corresponding addition and subtraction of knowledge, although inevitable, also reveals the "dark side of paradigms" (2012:140) where the loss of knowledge in favour of other, 'new' knowledge is, and has been, as Burke observes, both deliberate and unintentional, and has been used, historically, as a means to exert power and control by one group or society over another.

The archive and colonial fantasy

The losing of knowledge, Burke suggests, is "sometimes accidental, sometimes purposeful, sometimes something in between" (2012:145) and occurs predominantly through three destructive processes: hiding, destroying and discarding. In addition to the literal and metaphorical discarding of knowledge, as mentioned above, knowledge can also become hidden, intentionally, through acts of censorship or its classification as secret (thereby limiting access to particular kinds of knowledge) or accidentally, through being mislaid, particularly, as Burke notes, in instances of "information overload" (2012:147) where certain memories or documents become lost in amongst the plethora of other information and/or memories.

Similarly, knowledge is also destroyed, purposefully or by happenstance, through death (of people or groups of people) and various processes of deletion, ranging from book-burning to the all-too-easy excising of information from digital or electronic records.

The destruction, discarding and loss of knowledge in favour of other knowledge has been widely identified as a prominent feature, and driving force, within the colonial archive and, as such, critique of colonial archives has become a cornerstone of postcolonial and decolonial studies and archival discourse. As Burke acknowledges, colonial invasion by Europeans into the Americas, Asia, Australasia and Africa resulted in “frontier zones” (2012:207) where cultural collisions between differing knowledge systems occurred, initiating a process of “border gnosis” (2012:205). Within this process, and based on the misguided assumption that imperialist knowledge was superior, those indigenous knowledges deemed useful became subsumed into the Western system (framed as discoveries) while other knowledge was disqualified or replaced with supposedly superior Western knowledge (through re-education). Escobar notes this epistemological reframing when he suggests:

[T]he problem is not that dualisms [such as nature and culture, us and them, subject and object, mind and body] exist [...]. The problem is with the ways in which such divides are treated culturally, particularly the hierarchies established between the two parts of each binary, and the social, ecological, and political consequences of such hierarchies. (2017:94)

Through this paradigmatic reframing, Ghaddar and Caswell suggest, the colonial archive became a crucial part “of the ‘worlding’” of the colonised world, where “colonial and imperial actors from soldiers to statesmen to anthropologists to housewives to archivists constructed a representation of the colony [...] that would become the reality of the colony” (2019:79). This construction of the colonised world, as Mbembe (2015) has noted, positioned whiteness and Western ways of thinking at the centre of the archive and, through this, sought to establish Western epistemologies as ‘universal’ – “[making] us believe that it is everywhere; that everything originates from it and it has no outside” (2015:3). By focusing on what is absent or silent within the colonial archive, postcolonial and decolonial researchers thus recognise the social, spatial, temporal and ideological framing of knowledge and how it has been formed and seek to understand, critique and expose the *archaeology* of archival knowledge (in a Foucauldian sense) as a means to reveal the “dark side of paradigms” (Burke, 2012:140) and those knowledges and voices it silences and subjugates.

As Manoff notes, the production, dissemination, collection and discovery of knowledge went hand-in-hand with the colonial project, where empires were built, consolidated and maintained through the control and suppression of knowledge exercised through the epistemological mechanisms of the colonial archive. In this way, Manoff suggests, “Recording and documenting the empire was a way to bolster feelings of colonial power” where “the fantasy of an imperial archive” (2004:15) drove colonising nations to seek control and monopoly over knowledge by replacing indigenous systems of knowing with Western knowledge (as implicit in the written archive), thereby establishing an epistemological colonisation as well as a geographical one. Tuhiwai Smith (2012) observes this occurrence, from the perspective of New Zealand’s colonial history, when she states: “Under colonialism indigenous peoples have struggled against a Western view of history and yet been complicit with that view. We have often allowed our ‘histories’ to be told and have then become outsiders as we heard them being retold” (2012:34).

Carolyn Hamilton has also noted this process within historical African colonialism and its lasting presence in postcolonial contexts. In her paper *Living by fluidity: oral histories, material custodies and the politics of archiving* (2002), Hamilton notes the strong documentary-bias fundamental to the many archival projects regarding African histories and the centrality of this bias to Western notions of knowledge. Hamilton argues that the collection and recording of oral histories by predominantly white, Western historians and anthropologists during, and leading up to, colonisation was predicated on a perceived need to rescue precolonial African histories from disappearance. This need, she clarifies, was rooted in the colonial desire, or fantasy, to capture and transform historical memory into written or recorded documentation, based on the fallacious assumption that without such documentation, the knowledge or memory would be lost. Hamilton also observes the continuation of this process and logic in post-apartheid South Africa, where calls to formally preserve living heritage by government, particularly in the White Paper of 1998, continue to privilege Western notions of formalised capture. Ghaddar and Caswell similarly recognise this tendency within the current field of archival theory and practice and call for “a decolonial archival praxis” that “begins from [the] understanding, that western colonialism, empire and race” are “inextricably enmeshed with all facets of how we think, talk and work in the field” (2019:78). Like Hamilton, Ghaddar and Caswell both articulate an urgent need in archival

praxis for greater epistemic fluidity and diversity and an openness to “a relinquishing of the ... historiographies that would confine Indigenous peoples to a lost past, and ... a contemporary state of disappearance and irrelevance” (2019:80).

Through these processes of colonial knowledge capture, an ever-widening rift and hierarchy became established between the Western logocentric system of knowledge and its document-biased archive, and embodied, oral and performative knowledge systems that value the body and its role in the transmission of cultural memory, knowledge and social identity. As Tuhiwai Smith clarifies, during colonialism, knowledge associated with the body and orality became “reclassified” as *traditions* rather than *histories* (2012:34), thus positioning tradition and “the product of the oral” (wa Thiong’o, 1998:108) as “ahistorical” and without “any claims to any history” (1998:108).

The archive and the ‘performatic’

In her seminal book, *The archive and the repertoire: performing cultural memory in the Americas* (2003), postcolonial performance theorist Diana Taylor acknowledges this rift within the context and histories of the Americas. Taylor proposes the term ‘repertoire’ to describe those practices excluded from the Western archive due to its privileging of the written word. She argues that the “performatic” (2003:6) – those varied embodied actions or behaviours performed by the body in a particular culture or society – also function as “a system of learning, storing, and transmitting” (2003:16) social knowledge, memory and identity, both before and after the age of writing.⁶ Writing in the context of the Americas, and predominantly South America – a continent with a considerable history of conquest and colonisation by European nations – Taylor articulates the ways in which Western modes of archiving have played, and continue to play, an oppressive role in the documenting, recording and defining of cultural memories and knowledges of its indigenous peoples. Taylor describes a disjuncture, resulting from colonial contact, between “the *archive* of supposedly enduring materials ... and

⁶ Taylor uses the term ‘performatic’ (rather than ‘performative’ or ‘performance’) as a means to reference the adjectival form of ‘performance’ in a nondiscursive way. She suggests that terms such as ‘performative’ and ‘performance’ are too closely aligned with discourses within performance studies, gender studies and cultural studies and that it is important to also consider performance outside of these discourses. See Taylor (2003:6).

the so-called ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge” (2003:19). This rift, Taylor argues, clearly separates archive and repertoire and marks them as different and distinct while privileging the archive as a source and system of knowledge. Taylor suggests:

What changed with the Conquest was not that writing displaced embodied practice ... but the degree of legitimization of writing over other epistemic and mnemonic systems. [...] Nonverbal practices – such as dance, ritual, and cooking, to name a few – that long served to preserve a sense of communal identity and memory, were not considered valid forms of knowledge. (2003:18)

While Taylor acknowledges that “the relationship between the archive and the repertoire is not by definition antagonistic or oppositional” (2003:36) – that is, they are not binaries of each other but rather “in a constant state of interaction” (2003:21) – she suggests that “writing has served as a strategy for repudiating and foreclosing the very embodiedness it claims to describe” (2003:36), thereby “banishing the repertoire to the past” (2003:21). The binary implied here is that while the archive remains, the repertoire disappears – or more specifically – the writing of memory saves, and thereby legitimates as valid knowledge, what the performatic inevitably loses to the past.

In her book, *Performing remains: art and war in times of theatrical re-enactment* (2011), Rebecca Schneider concurs:

The words ‘document’ and ‘evidence’ and ‘record’ are, by the repetitively assumed force of convention in cultures privileging literature over orature ... habitually understood in distinction to the bodily, the messily, the ‘disappearing’. (2011:39)

This binaried understanding of the archive in relation to performance is, Schneider argues, a colonial misconception and becomes a way in which colonial archive culture is problematically upheld. In her 2001 essay, *Performance remains* (which she revisits in her book under the title ‘In the meantime: performance remains’), Schneider asks, “If we think of performance as the antithesis of ‘saving’, do we limit ourselves to an understanding of performance by a cultural habituation to the patrilineal, west-identified (arguably white-cultural) logic of archive?” (2001:100). Schneider thus suggests that the perception of performance as disappearing affirms its exclusion from, and subjugation to, the archive and ignores “other ways of knowing, other modes of remembering, that might be situated precisely in the ways in which performance remains, but remains differently” (2001:101).

For Schneider, the archive and performance are not all that dissimilar. Embodied performance, she suggests, is archival because, in concurrence with Taylor's assertions, "bodies are sites for transmission even if, simultaneously, they are also manipulants of error and forgetting" (2011:38). As such, bodies, like archives, also store, remember and disseminate memory, albeit in a manner markedly different from that of the archive. Similarly, Schneider contends, archives are another (although different) kind of embodied repertoire – "a set of live practices of access, given to take place in a house (the literal archive) built for live encounter with privileged remains" (2011:108). Archival materials and texts, in this understanding, only have meaning or activate their knowledge when encountered, live, through the body. The rift or "split" between archive and performance; document and body; valid and invalid knowledge, Schneider concludes, is thus "the archive's own division" (2011:108) – and thus another part of its fantasy.

In the context of African colonisation, wa Thiong'o has similarly observed the effects of the colonial archive's detrimental separating of the written archive from that of the body in relation to orature. As wa Thiong'o contends, orature (Africa's "oldest" performatic tradition of transmitting memory, histories and mythologies through the performance of oral and embodied texts) became "the only tradition against which the colonial state often took firm measures, banning many of the songs and performances" (1998:105). Alongside the actual destroying of existing textual archives in African locales and the intentional suppression of indigenous knowledge through orature, an overt "privileging of the written over the oral" (1998:108) was introduced through an "elaborate education and philosophic system" (1998:21) built by the colonial state. wa Thiong'o argues that this privileging of written memory over orature – a paradigm "exported to Africa" (1998:108) – established a binary opposition intended to rationalise and legitimate colonial subjugation, "with the written and the civilized being identified with Europe as a whole, while the rural, the oral, and the ahistorical were identified with Africa" (1998:108). As such, wa Thiong'o contends, by privileging the written archive as the sole custodian of knowledge, orature and embodied performatic memory were delegitimised to the point where "the product of the oral no longer belonged to history" (1998:108). The establishing of this paradigm, wa Thiong'o suggests, represents an overt attempt, by the coloniser, to distance the colonised subject from "any claims to any history as the basis of his resistance and affirmation of humanity" (1998:108).

Through this rift created between the written (enduring) archive and performatic (disappearing) ways of transmitting memory, European colonisers were able to instigate a concurrent epistemic colonisation, or a 'colonising of the mind', in an attempt to render colonised peoples separated and distanced from those histories and knowledges indigenous to them. In this way the colonial archive relegated indigenous peoples to the status of 'nonbeing' or, as Bogue has described, "vanishing subjects"—bodies "without histories" (2012:33), essentially erased from the archive and, more so, "historically excluded from the history of thought" (2012:34).

The archive and the 'vanishing subject'

In his seminal postcolonial text, *Black skins, white masks* (1986/1952), Fanon describes two positionalities which, he argues, underpin all instances of global coloniality and epistemic racism through their relegation and separation of bodies into two distinct zones: the 'zone of being' and the 'zone of nonbeing'. The zone of being recognises humanity, individuality, subjectivity and affords civil, social and legal rights to those bodies categorised within it. By contrast, within the zone of nonbeing, the subject is dehumanised, denied subjectivity and individuality, and is relegated to a sub-human status, thereby deprived of those rights afforded to being. When Bogue speaks of the "vanishing subject" (2012:33) within the archive, he refers to those bodies (in this specific instance, black, African bodies) consigned to the zone of nonbeing by Western thought, whose knowledges, histories and memories have, from the onset, been either excluded or erased from the colonial archive because "they were never seen as alive" (2012:34). Bogue uses the paradoxical term "living corpses" (2012:33) to describe this complex positionality of erased bodies who have been framed within the Western archive as anonymous, ahistorical, corpse-like nonbeings (as "bodies [that] rest without histories or names"), but whose actual bodies, as living embodiments of knowledge and memory, simultaneously, and surreptitiously, bring with them, into the archive, the traces of "a set of practices that generated thoughts" (2012:34).

Fred Moten, in his critique and development of Fanon's theories, extends the understanding of the zone of nonbeing and its relegation of the body to the status of not-quite-alive (in relation to blackness in the African-American context) through, what he calls, "the radically dispossessive no-place of the hold" (Moten, 2013:751-752). The 'no-place of the

hold' refers, in one sense, to the cargo hold of a ship, which, during the transatlantic slave trade transported and held black bodies as commodities, or rather, as bodies suspended somewhere between object-status and subject-status, as un-subjective bodies or, as Moten describes, "objects that can and do resist" (2003:1). Being in the hold of a ship (as a physical space), Moten argues, is akin to being dispossessed of place, having no-place, and thus no basis on which to establish a sense of being. He writes: "It's terrible to have come from nothing but the sea, which is nowhere, navigable only in its constant autodislocation" (2013:744). In another sense, the 'no-place of the hold' also describes a paradigmatic space, like Fanon's zone, that figuratively holds black bodies and their movement in a kind of non-space in which blackness, beyond nonbeing, becomes synonymous with "nothingness", where the black body is defined through its social and political death, or as Moten articulates, where black life "is lived, if you will, in the burial ground of the subject" (2013:739).

The colonial archive's relationship with death and its (related) attempt to maintain and propagate division between itself and those embodied acts and utterances of the 'living corpses' it strives to control, is a phenomenon that Mbembe extrapolates in his paper, *The power of the archive and its limits* (2002). Mbembe argues that the archive's power stems from its "trade with death" (2002:22) as it regulates and controls how and what, and in what manner, the memories and traces of the dead are able to influence the present, and by extension, the future. The archive, he suggests, "is fundamentally a matter of discrimination and of selection, which, in the end, results in the granting of a privileged status to certain written documents, and the refusal of that same status to others, thereby judged 'unarchivable'" (2002:20). This 'privileged status' (which, Mbembe emphasises, is essentially imaginary) in turn validates memory to the level of proof – "proof that a life truly existed, that something actually happened" (2002:21).

Within this process, however, the bestowing of proof status through interment into the archive is concurrently an act of suppression, of "laying something into a coffin, if not to rest, then at least to consign elements of that life which could not be destroyed purely and simply" (2002:22). Acknowledging the body and its performative repertoire as a valid site for the transmission and storage of memory and knowledge positions the body, even when denigrated to the sub-status of 'living corpse', as capable of holding traces of history and memory that cannot easily be discarded or destroyed. Thus, Mbembe posits, the interment

(and thus inclusion) of the subjugated dead and their memory into the archive, despite the archive and Western thought's concurrent exclusion of these bodies, becomes an attempt to "establish unquestionable authority over" and "to tame the violence and cruelty of which 'remains' are capable" (2002:22).

Within the colonial archive this trade with death is essentially doubled in respect of colonised 'living corpses,' where social and political death occurs, in the first instance, through the paradigmatic framing of the body as ahistorical and not-quite-alive by the archive's subjugation of performative knowing and, again, through the burial of embodied memory, transformed into archival document. In this way, the epistemic privileging of archival knowledge over embodied knowledge is upheld while concurrently attempting to ensure control over the "traces of the deceased" (2002:22) by entombing, burying and hiding their remains. As wa Thiong'o, Mbembe and Bogue acknowledge, despite these attempts by the colonial archive to subjugate and delegitimise the value of embodied memory, these knowledges and histories are inevitably subsumed into the archive as traces or, as Mbembe describes, as "the destroyed archive [that] haunts the state in the form of a spectre" (2002:24). These spectres, which exist as virtual potentials or as objects with no "objective substance" (2002:24), haunt the archive's actual documents and narratives and fill those gaps, silences and redactions the archive, as a system, seeks to keep hidden. In this way, an encounter with the archive's silences and spectres, in conjunction with its objects, presents a way in which archival knowledge can be significantly critiqued and where knowledge, constructed and construed in the time and spaces of the past, can be reconsidered, reconstructed, even reimagined, in the present moment, for the purposes of a potentially alternative future.

Performing (with/through/from) the archive – towards the anarchival

While historical colonial empires have, for the most part, been dismantled (or, at the very least, have significantly changed or altered their overtly oppressive imperial forms), the undoing of epistemic colonisation is, and has been, a significantly longer, more complex process. Calls to 'decolonise the mind' (wa Thiong'o, 1986), 'decolonise knowledge' (Mbembe, 2015) and to 'decolonise the university' (Mbembe, 2016) have recognised that epistemic decoloniality requires a renegotiation and a re-centring of how knowledge is understood and

how thinking is thought about. This undoing of epistemic oppression, it is acknowledged, is not a retroactive process of returning to a nostalgically reified, precolonial origin, but rather a creative, often futuristic, project of recognising the oppressive, often insidious, nature of colonial knowledge systems and imagining a way out of these seemingly established structures through a process of re-thinking that does not reaffirm and uphold inherited epistemic violences.

Leswin Laubscher has noted, in relation to South Africa's apartheid archive in particular, the need for a "liberatory praxis" whereby "re-engaging and expanding" the apartheid archive enables "re-examining and understanding racialised histories, making sense of their propagated impacts upon the present and considering how such alternative readings of histories may highlight different possibilities for an imagined future" (2013:22). Importantly, Laubscher acknowledges both *re-engaging* and *expanding* as strategies for, what others have called, "the liberation of the [apartheid] archive" (Stevens, Duncan & Sonn, 2013:29). While many scholars acknowledge the importance of adding to, and thus expanding, colonial archives through the inclusion of those previously excluded voices and counter-narratives (Hamilton, 2002; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012; Sonn, Stevens & Duncan, 2013), the imaginative re-engaging with the archive is equally important as a resistant strategy. Re-engaging the archive becomes a way in which "to cast a different socio-political light ... so that what is sometimes concealed in shadows becomes illuminated" (Stevens, Duncan & Sonn, 2013:29). This strategy opens the archive to another kind of expansion, where its augmentation emerges from what is already there – albeit in trace form.

Similarly, Taylor has suggested, in the context of Latin American studies, that "the concept of performance, as an embodied praxis and episteme, for example, would prove vital in redefining Latin American studies because it decenters the historical role of writing introduced by the conquest" (2003:17). While specific to Latin America, Taylor's statement can be regarded as useful advice to a broader range of post- or de-colonial engagements with the archive, where the critique of epistemic colonisation necessitates the need to also re-centre and re-negotiate the residual power dynamic between embodied knowing and Western, logocentric epistemologies. In order to decolonise the mind as well as the archive, it is also, therefore, vital to readdress the imbalance created by the separating of archive and performance. Engaging *with* the archive, departing *from* the archive or working *through* the

archive, through the medium of embodied performance, presents a potential way in which the archive can *anarchive* itself and where historical knowledge, constructed and produced by the archive, can be rethought through the alternative processes and logics of the body.

Towards this end, I offer, in the follow chapter, a deeper conceptualising of the anarchival and extrapolate what an anarchival engagement with the archive through the body might entail. This is considered in relation to the embodied research practices underpinning this project, and as such, these are introduced and contextualised in the following section as a means to locate the anarchival in practice as well as theoretically.

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUALISING THE ANARCHIVAL

I first came across the term ‘anarchival’ in Hal Foster’s paper, *An archival impulse* (2006), in which he observes an increasing archival interest emerging in the work of various contemporary American and European visual artists. While the title of the paper and his argument delineate an *archival* impulse, where the artworks he refers to are seen as emerging from a desire to reconsider past artworks from the archive, Foster acknowledges, “perhaps ‘anarchival impulse’ is the more appropriate phrase” (Foster, 2006:144). In this instance, Foster offers the “more appropriate” anarchival as a term to better describe the kind of archival engagement evident in the artworks he considers. He acknowledges that these projects, while archival in their clear reference to other artworks from the past, are not concerned with an exact reproduction of the past artwork nor with “absolute origins,” but instead are “drawn to unfulfilled beginnings or incomplete projects – in art and in history alike – that might offer points of departure again” (2006:144). In his argument, Foster offers an important strand toward conceptualising the anarchival as that which is not concerned with origins, authenticity or factuality, but rather a desire for new departures and the unearthing of a multiplicity of nascent, pre-existing possibilities from within the archive itself. This desire is predicated on a subversive understanding of the archive and the artworks it contains, as being continually incomplete, unfulfilled and thus always open to further actualisation and new discovery.

Foster’s assertion that anarchival desire is concerned with the past as a point of departure is further explicated by Lepecki in his paper, *The body as archive: will to re-enact and the afterlives of dances* (2010). In this paper, Lepecki observes a similar tendency in the work of various contemporary choreographers and live art practitioners. Although he does not use the term ‘anarchival’, Lepecki rearticulates Foster’s ‘archival impulse’ as a “will to archive” (2010:28), which he describes as the desire “to identify in a past work still non-exhausted creative fields of ‘impalpable possibilities’” (2010:31).⁷ Lepecki argues that this “will” is inextricably linked to the body of the artist, itself a kind of archive, and occurs most

⁷ Lepecki’s move to the concept of “will to archive” is motivated by Lepecki’s desire not to explain re-enactments as deriving from a psycho-social lack of historical connections to the past (as Foster does, in a kind of psychological explanation of such impulse/drive) but to explain it through an impersonal affirmation of the past over the present. This non-personal, virtual “will,” is then actualized in and as performances.

effectively through body-based art forms such as performance or, more specifically, choreography. He argues that the desire to re-enact past dances from the archive, differently, through the body, constitutes a means to “unlock, release, and actualize a work’s many (virtual) com- and impossibilities” (2010:31). By describing these traces as virtual, Lepecki draws on Deleuzian notions of virtuality which recognise a particular relationship and flow between the realm of the virtual and the realm of the actual.

As noted in the Introduction, for Deleuze, the virtual realm is one of intensities and forces which have no material form but are nonetheless real and can be sensed and felt by the body. As Adrian Parr explains, virtual intensities become actualised through what Deleuze calls “differentiation” (2008:254). Importantly, the relationship between the virtual and actual is thus one of difference, where the actual is not a direct representation or manifestation of the virtual (as an abstract essence of a particular thing) but rather a creative transforming where the flow of the virtual into the actual “produces something new as it actualizes” (2008:254). For Lepecki, choreography presents a space in which these virtual potentialities, existing as traces within the archive, can be reimagined and given new, temporary form through their embodied reinvention in the present.

Lepecki’s ‘will to re-enact’ resonates strongly with Derrida’s use of the term ‘anarchive’ in *Archive fever*. Describing the Archive Drive, Derrida suggests: “It is to run after the archive, even if there’s too much of it, right where something in it anarchives itself” (Derrida, 1995:91). Here Derrida alludes to a deconstructive capacity of the archive to unmake and remake itself, where its many ‘somethings’ (virtual traces, excesses, silences and gaps) remain actively open to further transformative (re)actualisation and re-engagement. Elisa Adami and Alessandra Ferrini (2014) propose that, while Derrida’s use of the term may, on first reading, infer a strong resonance with notions of anarchy (as a composite term combining the words ‘anarchy’ and ‘archive’), the term itself implies a multiplicity of interpretations. They note that the Greek prefix ‘ana’ can be read as indicating that which is “above”, “against”, “wrong” as well as “upside-down” and suggest that this broad understanding of the term is necessarily fluid to coincide with the anarchive’s oscillation between multiple objectives, constantly shifting between a destructive, subversive, anarchic, expansive and regenerative relationship with the archive.

In this understanding the anarchival is conceived as being *more* than the archive, rather than its replacement. The anarchival emerges from, supersedes and explodes from within the limits of the archive, becoming the bomb to unearth what is hidden in the archive as well as the net to catch what emerges or what the archive cannot hold. The anarchival is therefore conceptualised in relation to the archive and understood through its fluid, ever-changing and disruptive relationship with the archival. If the archive is understood as tangible evidence, official accounts, facts and figures and self-assigned authority, then the anarchival is “lower case... misprint... erratum... imagination... voices dissident, unwanted thoughts... fermentation and ooze... indecisive... the robber/thief... the evil twin, the happy accident” (Goodman, 2016:107). From Foster, Lepecki and Derrida’s musings on the anarchival, three fundamental principles emerge: the anarchival is rooted in a desire to reimagine the archive, differently; it emerges from a subversive, regenerative and expansive encounter with the archive’s virtual traces and excesses; and the anarchival is fundamentally an action – an embodied process enacted through the body’s encounter with the archive’s many virtualities.

Towards a working definition: anarchiving as subversive action

The most extensive conceptualising of the anarchival emerges from Massumi and Manning’s Senselab project, which was held in Montreal in 2016 and which resulted in the online publication of the conference findings in the aptly named, *The go-to how-to book of anarchiving* (Murphie, 2016a). In this publication Massumi offers a list of working principles which begin to outline a loose definition of the anarchival and point to some of its quintessential functions by locating it within a theoretical framework informed by philosophers such as Whitehead, Deleuze and Guattari. Beyond an understanding of the anarchival as being concerned with creating new expressions through creative engagement with archival traces (as proposed by Foster and Lepecki), Massumi further situates the anarchival as a “research-creation” (Massumi, 2016a:7) practice closely aligned to a kind of philosophical activism.⁸

⁸ While it is common practice in South Africa to use the term Practice-as-Research (PaR), Massumi uses the Canadian equivalent of this term: Research-creation. For this reason, I use both terms interchangeably, recognising a similarity between the two terms while acknowledging a geographical difference in context.

Through his working principles Massumi positions the anarchic as an embodied methodology for the reconsideration of dominant or hegemonic epistemologies as well as a means to invent, conceive of and express new ways of living and being in the world. Massumi bases this philosophical activism within a “nonobject philosophy” where the “reality of the world exceeds that of objects” (Massumi, 2011:6). Echoing Whitehead’s process philosophy and Deleuzian notions of becoming, Massumi argues that to “perceive the world in an object frame is to neglect the wider range of its germinal reality” (2011:6), and instead proposes a phenomenological understanding of the world as a series of on-going processes of experience. In his book, *Semblance and event: activist philosophy and the occurrent arts* (2011), Massumi clarifies this nonobject activist philosophy as being “noncognitive” (2011:7), that is, a way of thinking about the experience of the world that does not presuppose Platonic and Cartesian hierarchical binaries of subject/object, mind/body, thought/feeling. Whereas classical Western philosophy positions the subject as the centre point in defining and understanding reality and the (object) world, noncognitive philosophy recognises the nature of the subject as processual – as one decentralised part of continuous, “always-in-germ” experiences and “events” (2011:7) with the world and its objects.

Noncognitive philosophy is thus activist through its re-balancing of how the subject considers and thinks about the world, where perception and feeling through the body are elevated, and cognition, understood as an exercise of the analytical mind alone, is displaced as a dominant way of knowing. From this paradigm, the encounter between a subject and an object is redefined as a becoming – “a process of self-creation” (2011:3) emerging from the co-composing of forces, intensities and affects between desubjectivised subjects and objects – rather than a unidirectional relation where the object is defined by the subject who in turn defines itself, and its reality, in opposition to the object.

Massumi thus conceptualises the anarchic within the broader “philosophical turn” in recent theatre and performance research. As Cull explains, this turn towards philosophy in performance can be understood as “an intensification of its long-standing interest in and engagement with philosophy, as a source of diverse concepts, plural methods and multiple ontologies that can be productively explored in relation to performance” (2012a:2). Within this context Cull further proposes the increasing emergence of what she calls ‘performance-philosophy’ which, she suggests, moves beyond “the tendency of both disciplines to *apply*

philosophy to performance, to treat performance as the illustration of pre-existing philosophical thought” and recognises, instead, that performance is capable of “its own kind of thinking” (2012a:3, emphasis in original).⁹ As is made particularly clear in Massumi’s use of the term ‘research-creation’ in describing the anarchival, this thinking occurs through both *research* and *creation*. As Cull concurs, “‘research’ is only [one] way to construe how performance thinks” (2012a:3), since human “reflective practitioners” are not “the only one[s] doing the thinking in the creation of performance” (2012a:4). Creation, Cull contends, when considered through Deleuzian thought, recognises that “*everything thinks* – including nonhuman aspects of performance – because every ‘thing’ is immanent to the creativity of life, an expression of how life thinks itself in and as the creation of different ‘things’” (2012a:4). Massumi’s framing of the anarchival as a philosophical action and creative process thus positions the anarchival, as Murphie notes, as a means to think “a way out of systems, often from within, to life’s living” (2016b:5).

In this vein, Massumi describes the anarchival as a “repertory of traces” (2016a:6). Unlike the archive, which is also a repertory of (material or actual) traces, these traces are not conceived as passive, stable and tangible artefacts of the past but rather as virtual, reactivatable “carriers of potential” that “trigger new events which continue the creative process from which they came but in a new iteration” (2016a:6). Like Foster and Lepecki, Massumi associates the anarchival with a desire to create and actualise different, unrealised potentials in the archive. These potentials grow from the anarchival’s function as a “process seedbank” (Koložsvári & Morales, 2016:16), where its virtual traces become springboards, departure points or “lines of flight” (in a Deleuzoguattarian sense)¹⁰ for other, new processes. Unlike the archive, the anarchival does not hold any knowledge, instead “it carries suggestions for the new” (2016:16) that can only be accessed through creative engagement with those traces. Massumi suggests that this avoidance of material form (as a tangible object) is a fundamental aspect of the anarchival, which, he argues, “is by nature something to be performed rather than presented” (2016b:47). In this instance, the body and its engagement

⁹ Cull’s conceptualising of performance-philosophy is introduced in her book *Theatres of immanence* (2012a) and is expanded further in *Encounters in performance philosophy* (2014), a book co-edited by Cull in collaboration with Alice Lagaay.

¹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari describe “lines of flight” as “movements of deterritorialisation and destratification” (1987/1980:3) – that is, as metaphorical pathways that break away from or explode out of known, segmentary or organised spaces or pathways.

with these traces of the past creates, what Massumi (2011:3) calls, an “occurrent event” – an active, temporal, and experiential *process* of self-creation and becoming that evades sedentary existence through object form and privileges perception, feeling and sensation as ways of knowing and thinking. For Massumi, the archival object can only ever be a point of departure for the anarchival, which is quintessentially a subversive embodied action and experiential process.

Many of Massumi’s suggestions for defining the anarchival thus concern its relationship with documentation stored in the archive. Massumi argues that, although the anarchival needs documentation from the archive in order to begin to actualise, it is never documentation itself and cannot be contained in the archive nor in any object. He refers to the anarchival as a “feed-forward mechanism” that emerges from and passes through the documentation of the archive, but as an “excess energy ... of formative tendencies; compositional forces seeking a new taking-form; lures for further process” (2016a:7). In this sense the intention of the anarchival is not to create a direct manifestation of a document as an event in time but to move past the recorded activity completely to find something else, and another process, beyond it. Massumi recognises, however, the need for the anarchival to take form, even though its intention as a practice-based research technique is concerned predominantly with process and the evasion of sedentary form. As Csenge Kolozsvári and Mayra Morales note, “it is not enough to experiment! The Anarchival needs to take form(s) to be shared. This final form is not the goal but it is necessary” (2016:40). Kolozsvári and Morales articulate here an understanding of performance product where the process and its taking-form as a performance are entangled with each other rather than the process being a precursor to the product.

Massumi describes this characteristic of the anarchival as a “process-making engine” (2016a:7), where multiple processes lead to the creation of multiple products but where none of these are *the product*, but rather a multiplicity of taking-form iterations inextricably linked to their various processes. Thea Patterson explicates this interrelation further:

All the intangible anarchival materials of the doing, thinking, feeling, touching vibrations do resonate in the folds of whatever ‘it’ ends up being. This ‘it’... carves out space and time, makes cuts in the wavefield/function, and momentarily articulates something out of chaos. Nothing is lost. It is all still there and nowhere at the same time. (2016:52)

An anarchival 'product' can therefore be seen as a kind of paradox. While resisting form and objecthood, the anarchival must take form in order to share its thinking but in a way that does not calcify its processes into fixed forms and fixed subjects. In this sense the anarchival must strive to exist as a liminal expression between form and formlessness, constantly suspended in states of taking-form and processes of becoming. To achieve this the anarchival must operate as a "cross-platform phenomenon" navigating its activation and taking-form within the relays and spaces "between media, between verbal and material expression, between digital and off-line archivings and ... between all of the various archival forms it may take and the live, collaborative interactions that reactivate the anarchival traces, and in turn create new ones" (Massumi, 2016a:7).

Manning (2016b:67) refers to these paradoxical taking-form expressions of anarchival research as "anarchic shares." In actualising the anarchival into consciousness and tangible form, the anarchival ironically becomes an archive. The anarchic share is thus conceptualised as an event and, specifically, a collaborative, interactive and experiential sharing of a process and a situation. Manning identifies the anarchic share as a collective event which reconceptualises the audience as more than observers who witness a product of outcomes and findings (a dissemination of the research), and instead regards those who share in the event as active co-composers who constitute an integral part of the research process. This reframing of the role of the audience repositions the sharing of anarchival research through performance as a methodology that extends beyond the performer or researcher, their field of enquiry and a praxical investigation of concepts and practices. Similarly, the thinking of the research also includes the experiencing of process through the sharing for the researcher as well as those who participate in and experience the research with them.

This conflation of process, performance and reception in anarchival research processes has strong resonances with Cvejić's unitary perspective of the performance of "choreographic problems" (2015:22). Cvejić uses this phrase (which is also the title of her book) to refer to practice-based research methodologies where the performance of choreography is understood as one multifaceted live event rather than a singular aspect of a divergent research methodology that differentiates between process, performance and reception. Cvejić argues:

Choreography doesn't merely precede a performance as the creative process that then culminates in an event, nor can it be reduced to a technical, craft-oriented definition [...]. The making continues to operate in the performing in the sense that its problems persist and give rise to different solutions in the performing of, attending to, and also thinking beyond the spatio-temporal event of performance. Likewise, the performance virtually exists in the making: the thought of the body is present in the conception of choreographic ideas as in every rehearsal. (2015:14)

Cvejić observes within choreographic performance a proclivity to create work by identifying a problem that can only be interrogated through the medium of performance itself and explored through a choreographic process that does not distinguish between the creative process (as occurring prior to performance) and the process of the performance (as an expression of a product-oriented process).

Choreographing problems becomes, for Cvejić, a "method of creation by posing questions that differentiate terms and conditions under which the creation of a material object – such as ... the composition of a bodily movement – unfolds" (2015:2). This distinguishes choreographic performance as a specific approach because the choreographic problem maintains a dual status by arising from the process of creation and continuing to provoke and emerge through the performance. Cvejić contends, "a real problem doesn't disappear but must continue to transform itself and force thought to learn beyond knowledge" (2015:40). The choreographic problem is therefore not something to be *solved* through choreographic investigation but rather a point of departure and a line of flight to other ideas, thoughts, and often, more problems. Cvejić's use of the word 'problem' in this approach is thus related to Deleuze's conception of problems as "the objects of Ideas" (Deleuze in Cvejić, 2015:2). For Deleuze, problems are relative to the virtual realm in that they are unactualised, affective multiplicities that, through interrogation, give rise to Ideas. An Idea, in this sense, is a "continuous, defined multiplicity" (Deleuze in Cvejić, 2015:46), that has been actualised in spatio-temporal terms and has thus moved from the virtual into the actual.

In a similar way, the choreographic problem serves to instigate *thinking* (from the virtual) and the emergence of a multiplicity of alternative thoughts and ideas (in the actual). Cvejić argues:

When we confer upon the choreographic practices ... the capacity to engender thought, we mean that they contribute to a philosophical rethinking of the relationship between

the body, movement, and time and, consequently, give rise to distinctive concepts of their own. (2015:2)

In concurrence with Cull, Cvejić suggests that the thinking around the problem in this instance is not limited to the reflective researcher and their subjective needs and desires but creates space for the process and performance to think and articulate thought as well. Cvejić calls this “the thought of the performance” (2015:16), and it is conceived as separate and distinct from the thought of the choreographer or performer. This “choreographic thinking”, as Manning (2016a:11) concurs, is able to exist in both choreographic and philosophical forms at the same time, and is experienced cognitively and experientially by both performer and audience, during and after the performance event. This aligns with the dual layers of practice explored in this thesis, as noted in the Introduction, which recognise that thinking occurs in the *doing* of performance practice but also *continues*, differently, after the doing, through the practice of writing and thinking-through the doing.

In conceiving the anarchival, the quintessential difference that distinguishes it from the archive and encapsulates its nature and functioning is that the anarchival is ultimately a process and a methodology. It is something that one *does* rather than something that one might *have*. Whereas the archive can be both a system as well as a place where material traces of the past are preserved and accessed, the anarchival is a technique and a tool for processes that redirect this access toward the seeking of new unknown potentials from within the archive, “veering away from the given, even as it takes the given up and attunes it to the new” (Murphie, 2016c:42). Francisco Trento, André Fogliano and Halbe Kuipers propose that through this encounter with archival detritus, anarchival research is steered by two important initiating questions: “what could have been? And what can be other?” (2016:104), positioning the archival source as an impulse to initiate a process of discovering alternatives and imagining other possible futures.

Towards micropractice as an anarchival research strategy

In *The go-to how-to book of anarchiving*, South African performance artist and academic Claire Rousell identifies and describes “micropractice” (Rousell, 2016:9) as one potential approach to conducting anarchival research. Using Deleuze and Guattari’s guidelines for deterritorialising, Rousell articulates a practical strategy for situating the researcher within

anarchival research-creation processes. The intention of micropractice, Rousell argues, is to provide “a tool, a technique, a set of practices for deterritorialising” (2016:9). By deterritorialising, Rousell refers to Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of deterritorialisation, delineated in *Anti-Oedipus* (1977/1972) and *A thousand plateaus*, which refers to the literal and metaphoric removal of oneself from one territory through a line of flight in order to critically locate oneself from the vantage point of another, now reterritorialised, territory.

In a practical sense, this understanding of micropractice necessitates situating oneself on a particular ‘stratum’ or within a particular process or territory. From this point the researcher experiments with the unique “opportunities” (Rousell, 2016:9) this position or process offers, with an intention of finding potential lines of flight or pathways that can lead the researcher into other territories and other processes. Micropractice thus becomes a useful and effective practical research methodology because it necessitates the location of the subjective researcher within the research, but is ultimately focused on the deterritorialising of this position and of this subjectivity in favour of finding other territories, processes and experiences resulting from the initial point of departure. In this way the subjectivity of the researcher is decentralised within micropractice even though it is immersed and inculcated within the research. As such, Rousell proposes, deterritorialising through micropractice presents a strategy through which to question how we “understand our own received positions and shift them” and ask ourselves “can these microshifts in perception create shifts within social movements?” (9) beyond our individual, subjective frames of reference.

The intention of micropractice to move beyond the subjective and the personal clarifies the relationship between micropractice as an archival research strategy and other theorisations of the ‘micro’ – specifically Foucault’s “micro-power” (1995/1975:27) and Deleuze and Guattari’s “micropolitics” (1987/1980:208). In *Discipline and punish* (1995/1975), Foucault recognises that power, understood as a relation rather than a thing, operates on both macro (state, governmental, institutional) and micro (the individual, the social body, everyday routine) levels. Describing how power infiltrates the individual and operates on the micro level, Foucault states

[I]t invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure upon them, just as they themselves, in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them. This

means that these relations go right down into the depths of society, that they are not localized in the relations between the state and its citizens or on the frontier between classes and that they do not merely reproduce, at the level of individuals, bodies, gestures and behaviour, the general form of the law or government. (1995/1975:27)

When critiquing or resisting power and control, Foucault thus contends that it is pivotal to consider the “micro-physics of power” (1995/1975:26) and the ways in which the body *is* disciplined and disciplines itself through its day-to-day enacting of the operations of power through various micro-practices. The use of the prefix ‘micro’ in this instance relates predominantly to scale – that is, power occurring at the level of self, of behaviour, and of the body.

Deleuze and Guattari’s usage of the micro- prefix differs from Foucault’s in that theirs does not only concern scale, but more so, alterity and difference existing alongside (or beneath) a perceived political hegemony or norm. The micro and the macro, in this conceptualising, are distinct from each other but “are inseparable, they overlap, they are entangled” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/1980:213). They explain:

In short, everything is political, but every politics is simultaneously a *macropolitics* and a *micropolitics*. [...] There is a micropolitics of perception, affection, conversation, and so forth. If we consider the great binary aggregates, such as the sexes or classes, it is evident that they also cross over into molecular assemblages of a different nature, and that there is a double reciprocal dependency between them. (1987/1980:213)

Massumi clarifies this double framing of the micropolitical by explaining another Deleuzoguatterian concept – microperception – which, he maintains, is of the body but is “not smaller perception; it’s a perception of a qualitatively different kind. It’s something that is felt without registering consciously” (Massumi, 2015:53). In this way, microperception occurs alongside or beneath what one might call macroperception (or actual, conscious perception). Massumi states, “There is no fright, or any affect for that matter, without an accompanying movement in or of the body” (2015:54). Similarly, Massumi suggests, “the ‘micro’ of micropolitical is not synonymous with small” (2015:70) but instead recognises that “even in the most controlled political situation there’s a surplus of unacted-out potential that is collectively felt. If cued into, it can remodulate the situation” (2015:58).

The relationship between the macro and micro can thus be seen to resonate with Deleuze and Guattari’s theorising of the Minor, and becoming-minoritarian, in relation to the Major. Deleuze and Guattari state: “When we say majority, we are referring not to a greater

relative quantity but to the determination of a state or standard in relation to which larger quantities, as well as the smallest, can be said to be minoritarian” (1987/1980:291). In this way, the majority relates to power and constitutes, irrespective of numerical quantity, a dominance or a hegemony. Conversely, the minor (as distinct from, although often inclusive of, ‘minority groups’), relates to those who may be larger in number as a group but who are “defined by ... the gap that separates them from this or that axiom constituting a redundant majority” (1987/1980:469). Deleuze and Guattari list women, children, animals, plants and molecules as minoritarian, who, despite their potentially vast numbers, are subjugated and subordinate to the “state of domination” typified by “white-man, adult-male” (1987/1980:291). This relationality is particularly apparent in the local context of contemporary South Africa, where the remnants of colonial and apartheid institutions, systems and epistemologies continue to position a vast black South African population as minoritarian despite its numerical majority.

In the introduction to *The minor gesture*, Manning articulates the association between micropolitics and the Minor when she writes, “While the grand gestures of a macropolitics most easily sum up the changes that occurred to alter the field, it is the minoritarian tendencies that initiate the subtle shifts that created the conditions for this, and any change” (2016a:1). In this statement, Manning acknowledges that change, on the level of macropolitics and the majority, is often effected through smaller shifts occurring on a micropolitical level, particularly by those framed relationally as minoritarian. These micro-shifts, Manning contends, encourage change and alterity because, at a micropolitical level alongside and beneath the macropolitical, they encourage movement “elsewhere” – away from “the governant fixity of the major in the name of normative political structures, of institutional life, of able-bodiedness, of gender conformity, of racial segregation” (2016a:7).

Like Foucault’s micro-power, Massumi similarly locates the micropolitical as being at work within the social body of the individual. He suggests that in order to initiate micropolitical change, “there is no better place to start than the local context in which you live and work every day” (Massumi, 2015:70) because “micropolitically, critique has to come from within” (2015:71). Christoph Brunner articulates a similar idea within anarchival micropractice which he describes as a process of “submerging” (2016:68). Brunner argues that in anarchival research it is necessary for the researcher to begin from the self, but to “enter underneath

the surface, beneath the apparatus of identitarian capture” (2016:69). Brunner conceives here an immersive practice where the researcher, after entering the process through the self, must deterritorialise their own needs, desires and subjectivities by submerging themselves in the stratum at which they begin. He describes the researcher’s role in anarchival research as “delving into apnoea” (2016:69); experiencing from a state of subjective and cognitive suspension, a process of co-becoming with and alongside the research. What Brunner and Rousell articulate is thus a research methodology that is not centred around the will and desires of the researcher (as subject), who must plan, direct, conceptualise and steer a creative research process, but where the researcher, by relinquishing subjectivity to the process, becomes a non-distinguishable, equal component within anarchival discovery.

From the explication above, micropractice is positioned as a uniquely anarchival creative research strategy and, for the purposes of this research project, is conceptualised through four fundamental principles. The first of these is the recognition that micropractice is not necessarily small (in relation to a larger practice) nor is it a singular component comprising a larger, overarching macro-practice. Micropractice, instead, is understood as a series of multiple, ongoing, inseparable, overlapping, and entangled practices (to echo Deleuze and Guattari) of a qualitatively different kind. A micropractice, in this sense, might include a lengthy, multifaceted, multi-participant process culminating in the sharing of an evening-length performance, or alternatively, a series of short, relational explorations producing small vignettes, fragments of action or physical images, which together might form within the performance of process. In this way, the three solo performance works comprising this research project are each understood as micropractices. Each of these, however, are also understood as emerging from several other diverse micropractices. Secondly, micropractice is essentially an *embodied* research strategy, occurring at the micropolitical level of the body and its ability to engage with, feel and co-compose with the virtualities and traces nascent within the archive. Although micropractice occurs in and through the body it also necessitates and encourages, as its third feature, a desubjectivising of the researcher through submersion within research processes. Lastly, the intention and aim of micropractice is always rooted in deterritorialising and the desire to find movement and flow away from one territory (whether a concept, a memory, a feeling or a past dance) to another, but through the unique opportunities of the territory itself, rather than the subjective desires of the researcher.

Towards an (an)archival trilogy: explicating a research methodology

In creating the trilogy of solo performances that underpin my research into processes of anarchiving, both micropractice and choreographic problems constitute useful frameworks through which to conceptualise the nature of these practice-led research expressions. It is important to acknowledge, however, that I was not cognitively aware of either of these methodologies, as they are named and articulated by Massumi, Rousell or Cvejić, while I was engaged with two of the three choreographic research processes. The first two (an)archives, *Detritus for one* and *Sacre for one*, were created and performed before I had encountered *The go-to how-to book of anarchiving* and Cvejić's *Choreographing problems* and emerged from a more general desire to explore the ways in which one might perform the archive or reimagine the dance archive choreographically.¹¹ Similarly, both of these works developed from other creative processes, explored prior to this doctoral study, in the form of ensemble works. While creating and researching the third work in the trilogy, *Ghostdance for one*, I was concurrently reading on both methodologies but was not overtly trying to implement these strategies in practice.

I establish this here as a way to clarify that none of the research processes I followed were conceived as direct translations or manifestations of these specific methodologies. Instead I apply these approaches somewhat retrospectively as a means to frame, locate and think-through the research practice in relation to a broader spectrum of methodological discourses. As such there are instances of divergence, contradiction and difference between my research practice and these specific methodologies as well as similarities, echoes and points of convergence. The specificities of these departures and resonances will become more apparent through the detailed analyses of the individual research processes and their guiding strategies which follow in Chapters Three, Four and Five, and as such, I do not explicate these in great detail here. At this point I would like to clarify the methodological approach of the overarching anarchival research project and identify in each individual process those intentions, characteristics and methodological strategies that relate to the anarchival and its role as an activist (and activating) mechanism for the disruption of knowledge.

¹¹ I use the phrasing (an)archival here to denote that while each work in the trilogy explores anarchival processes, their taking-form and the digital recordings of these, frame the works as archives.

The individual research processes I explore, first and foremost engage with body-centred research. As Parker-Starbuck and Mock explain, a body-centred approach to research recognises the body of the researcher as “the means for understanding how performance operates and makes meaning” (2011:210), where the body is recognised as “interpretable and flexible, yet materially and culturally specific” (2011:211). By locating the research in the body of the researcher, the analytical, interpretivist and data-collecting tools of the researcher are expanded to also include faculties of somatic, cognitive and sensory experience. A body-centred approach thus has phenomenological potential, where knowledge and information emerging from the research process can be accessed and collected through a multiplicity of receptors associated with the body engaged in an experiential process. Like Whitehead’s process philosophy, body-centred research places importance on the affective sensations and feelings felt in understanding the world as well as within a research process. As Parker-Starbuck and Mock note, this experiential body within body-centred research remains, however, “materially and culturally specific” (2011:211). The subjectivities, politics and representations written in and on the body therefore constitute a significant layer in the research process, where somatic experience and sensation emerging from the research are recognised as being linked to the specific body (as subject and object) within which the research occurs.

For these reasons, the research processes explored in the making of this (an)archival trilogy were necessarily based in the solo form, where the body of the researcher assumes multiple identities and roles, becoming a choreographer-performer-researcher. From this position, the researcher has greater access to a wider range of research processes and experiences within the project. In collaborative approaches to body-centred research, where the researcher might engage with multiple bodies in the research process in addition to, or in place of, their own, a process of extraction is required for the researcher to gain access to any non-verbal, ineffable, experiential or affective information emerging from the process. Extraction of this information from a group of collaborators would entail the translation of affects into a rationalised, structured and cognitive interpretation through journaling, orature or object-making. The researcher thus has limited access to the raw experience itself and is able to engage only with its filtered translation. By working through the solo form and locating my own body, subjectivities, memories and phenomenological experiences at the centre of

the research, I am able to access and experience diverse facets of the process on a micropolitical level.

The engagement with body-centred research through the solo form becomes, in this sense, a kind of micropractice where the body of the choreographer-researcher becomes the entry and departure point for a deterritorialising research process which seeks pathways that move away from the subjective, familiar experiences of the lived body toward new territories, strata and alternative experiential spaces. As articulated earlier, the potentials for new alternatives and unthought suggestions arise through experimental exploration between both the originating and the newly reterritorialised strata as well as any multiple, additional territories that may emerge. By positioning the subjective, written-upon body as the point of departure, the choreographer-researcher is able to acknowledge and locate their own subjectivity within the research while simultaneously finding distance and dissociation from the limitations of this subjectivity through those lines of flight within micropractice that serve to displace the body-centred research experience from the realm of the subjective into an unknown other.

This particular research methodology, I suggest, can thus be seen to open up an in-between space for creative exploration where the body is liminally positioned between subject and object, as both self and not-self. Brunner (2016:69) identifies this liminal understanding of the body as a crucial component for submerging as an anarchival technique where the researcher must surrender “the self” rather than *one’s* self. Methodologically, this distinction infers that in order to submerge oneself within micropractice, the self of the researcher needs to be decentralised within the process while still acknowledging that the affective experience of this process emerges from, and is particular to, the specific body through which research-creation occurs. Each of the three anarchival research-creation processes I explore within my overall project involve a similar navigation of the self. In all three instances a personal and subjective experience, in the form of memory or embodied trace, becomes a point of departure for the initial process, but where the processes themselves are guided by a conscious desire to constantly displace, minimise and move beyond the self as a centrality and to find ways in which to engage with the anarchival outside of myself and my own body.

This duality is alluded to in the title of each process, where the 'for one' (in *Detritus for one*, *Sacre for one*, and *Ghostdance for one*) is written in the lower case as a way to shift emphasis to the archival traces originating the research (detritus, *Sacre*, or ghost) rather than the body and self through which it is shared. In each of the works themselves, the shifting duality of self and not-self also becomes a characteristic, where the solo performer constantly oscillates between performing as *himself* while, at other times, actively seeking distance from this self, to perform as not-self. This is reflected in the chapters that follow through the dual use of both the first person ('I') as well as third person ('the performer') perspectives when reflecting and thinking-through each research process. When speaking directly to processes of micropractice and moments in each work where the self of the performer is prioritised, a first person voice is more appropriate because these moments begin from and involve the subjectivity and body of the researcher. Conversely, however, when reflexively describing particular moments, images or encounters from the process in performance where a distancing from self is pursued, third person narration becomes useful as a means to differentiate my *self* from the often desubjectivised self of the performer. A similar desubjectivity can be observed in each of the other performance works I analyse. Although each work is shown to have a personal experience relating to the self as its departure point, the examination of each work, I suggest, reveals how this initiating subjectivity is similarly deterritorialised as a means to open each work to broader questions and thinking beyond the originating locale.

In each creative research process, the archival traces originating the investigation connect to a common choreographic problem and constitute various strata for departure through a series of micropractices. The performing of the anarchic share thus represents both a thinking-through of a problem as well as an anarchival process of exploration which takes temporary form through an experiential occurrent event. As discussed earlier, these events are not concerned with solving the problem nor providing answers to any questions. Rather, the performance event becomes a manifesting of a process of grappling with a choreographic problem and thinking beyond the traces of archival capture, shared experientially with an audience. In much the same way as the researcher becomes submerged within the process as a means to uncover a phenomenological thinking in addition to a cognitive or interpretivist

one, the audience, I suggest, are similarly submerged in the event of sharing through a multisensory, embodied and active participation.

Anna Fenemore distinguishes between two modalities of perceiving performance by an audience in the occurrent arts. The first she identifies as “optical-visual” (2003:109) perception, where the experience of a performance engages an active perceiving by the audience member but where “communication as a system of coding (visual semiotics, textual interpretation, metaphor) is made central” and where “a spectator’s role ... is normatively one of pleasure fulfilment via projection of the self onto the object that is the performer” (2003:109). In this experiential modality the audience member’s sensory experience is centralised around the seeing sense and the connection between what is seen and the personal, individualised interpretations, readings and understandings that emerge from this sensation, cognitively. In contrast, “visceral-visual” (2003:110) perception, as Fenemore argues, occurs when the performer and spectator “share the same space literally, interactively and viscerally, with the overriding perceptual means of engagement between the two groups being one of social, spatial and temporal engagement” (2003:110). By ‘visceral-visual’, Fenemore describes a sensory experience of a performance event where the sense of looking and seeing (by the audience as subject at a performer as object) is decentralised within the experiential sensory process. By being submerged in an experience, in space and time, the visceral experience of the spectator’s body becomes multisensory without privileging the visual sense and where distinctions between subject and object become blurred, transporting the performance event outside of the realm of representation alone and into a realm of creation.

Visceral-visual perception thus becomes a modality through which affect, alongside interpretative meaning-making, emerges as an additional, alternative means for understanding and sensing embodied experience. Elena del Rio describes affect, in line with Massumi’s understanding, as the “body’s capacity to affect and be affected by other bodies, thereby implying an augmentation or diminution in the body’s capacity to act. Affect precedes, sets the conditions for, and outlasts a particular human expression of emotion” (2008:10). In this description, Del Rio alludes to an understanding of affect that acknowledges the body, and more specifically the moving performing body, as an assemblage of both virtual and actual expressions that can affect and be affected by other bodies. Drawing from a Deleuzian

conception of the body as “an assemblage of forces or affects that enter into composition with a multiplicity of other forces or affects” (2008:3), Del Rio acknowledges affect as a way of knowing that “restores to the body the dimension of intensity lost in the representational paradigm” (2008:23). The experience of affect by a spectator therefore manifests as an embodied sensation or emotion on a phenomenological level, through an affective encounter with another body’s virtual and/or actual expressions, separate from any kind of conscious interpretation of the body as a coded signifier for representation and meaning.

Del Rio terms this encounter “affective-performative”, where a shift in emphasis transpires “from ‘organized’ body, slave to morality and representation, to the ethical and creative potential of the expressive body” (2008:16). This shift distances the performance paradigm from that which is predominantly representational and mimetic towards an understanding of performance practice that is also “creative and ontogenetic” (2008:4). Del Rio summarises this distinction as, “In representation, repetition gives birth to the same; in performance, each repetition enacts its own unique event” (2008:4).

In a similar understanding, the taking-form performance events of *Detritus for one*, *Sacre for one* and *Ghostdance for one* manifest for an audience through various choreographic structures and mechanisms that seek to enact a visceral-visual and affective-performative experience of anarchival process rather than represent definitive meanings or elicit prescribed interpretations. While each event has choreographic and compositional structure and can therefore be repeated, the repetition itself is processual and experiential (for both performer and spectator) rather than solely representational, and as such, each repetition is conceived as a unique event or becoming with uncertain, variable outcomes and changeable affective propensities. The choreographic problem that constitutes a departure point for the research-creation processes opens pathways for deterritorialisation within the performance events for the performer, while affect, created through the performer’s embodied action, becomes a potential line of flight for the audience, who are invited to experience affect as a means to find distance from dominating representational paradigms and move toward other spaces and territories during, as well as after, the performance event itself.

Consolidating anarchival process: one problem, many strata

Before delving into the intricacies of each of the anarchival micropractices explored within this project in the following chapters, I would like to clarify how this methodology, as detailed in this chapter, is practically applied, differently, within each of the three research processes. As noted earlier, the solo performance works are understood as different micropractices, all of which also involve and emerge from several other micropractices. In each instance, the distinct micropractices can be seen to depart from a unique territory where a specific understanding of an archival remain becomes a source of virtual traces and thus the initiator for potential lines of flight into other territories. These multiple processes are connected by an overarching choreographic problem: *how might the virtual traces of the archive be re-actualised, differently, through the body?* The performance of each of the three works can be seen, as this discussion will show, as a corporeal and performative grappling with this problem. Each micropractice, then, becomes a process through which this problem is considered, according to differing conceptions of the qualities different kinds of virtual traces might offer.

In the first micropractice, examined in Chapter Three, memory (nascent within archival objects) is explored as an archival trace, where past encounters with objects are seen to remain, virtually, within those objects. The second micropractice, in Chapter Four, positions trace as an embodied virtuality – remembered physical intensities from past actions which continue to remain, corporeally, in trace form. The final micropractice, in Chapter Five, frames the ghosts of the dead as hauntological virtual traces, existing in both archival objects as well as the body and its behaviours. These three conceptions of archival trace are by no means exhaustive nor conclusive and thus do not constitute the *only* ways in which a virtual trace might be understood. These three conceptions reflect only what emerged through this specific research project.

This chapter has extrapolated the concept of the anarchival and has offered an understanding of its ontology as a particular kind of engagement with what the archive cannot hold – those traces of the past which exist in virtual form beyond, beneath and between its actual or material contents. Further, I have suggested that the desire to release and re-actualise these traces into different, reimagined forms constitutes an anarchival act, which can be understood as a kind of philosophical activism rooted in a need to disrupt the archive

as a system that both stores and produces particular kinds of knowledge. My theorising of the anarchival has been located within process philosophy and Deleuzian ontologies of being as a means to reveal the anarchival as a subversive, disruptive and regenerative force in relation to the archival, which seeks to redress the subjugation of the body and its knowledges, as propagated by the archive.

Micropractice, as a particular strategy for anarchival research, has been proposed and considered as an embodied process where micropolitical engagement with archival traces, through the realm of the self, become deterritorialised as a means to discover new archival iterations. Lastly, this chapter has introduced and conceptually framed the specific practical research engagements and methodologies underpinning the project, where anarchival micropractice occurs. The following chapter considers the first of these micropractices in more detail, where the virtual traces of the past, remaining specifically in archival objects, become the initiators of anarchival investigation.

CHAPTER THREE: OBJECTS

Introduction

This chapter considers the overarching choreographic problem of how the virtual traces of the archive might be re-actualised differently, in the specific context of archival objects. Departing from a conception of the archive as a collection of material objects, the framing of the archival trace, in this instance, relates to those virtualities within these objects which haunt the archive through their continued presence in virtual form. In terms of anarchival micropractice, these trace-containing objects are explored as the initiators of processes of deterritorialisation, where their virtual traces are positioned as potential lines of flight to other processes, actualisings or iterations of the past.

The chapter unfolds in two parts: Part 1 presents a detailed reflection and concurrent thinking-through of the process of creating the work *Detritus for one* and becomes, in turn, a springboard for a more focused analysis of two other South African performance works in Part 2. The exploration of archival objects in Part 1 is focused particularly on those objects used in processes of re-enactment or creative reimagining that are seen to stand-in for, and thus differ from, the original objects to which they might refer. As such, the research presents a consideration of the potentials of objects that are *given* or *assume* archival significance rather than those original artefacts actually contained in literal archives, as a means to surface the anarchival value emerging from this difference. In Part 2 I consider affect as a divergent kind of thinking that emerges from an anarchival encounter with archival objects and, in particular, through the disruption of hierarchical relationships relating to subjects and objects. The specific ways in which affect can be seen to disrupt traditional archival epistemologies are then elucidated through a critical analysis of Steven Cohen's *Put your heart under your feet... and walk!/To Elu* (2017) and Dineo Seshee Bopape's interactive installation work, *Sa koša ke lerole* (2017).

PART 1: THE OBJECT AS AN ARCHIVAL SOURCE

The first archival strategy explored in this research-creation project occurred through the process of making and performing the solo performance *Detritus for one*, which was created between January and July 2015 and was first performed at the National Arts Festival in Makhanda in July 2015. The work has subsequently been performed on two other occasions: at the Cape Town Fringe Festival in September 2015 and, in March 2017, at the Johannesburg Dance Umbrella. *Detritus for one* developed from the creation of two prior works: a performance series entitled *Retrospective – altered daily* in 2011,¹² which represented an initial stumbling-into the field of archival performance, and an ensemble work, *Detritus*,¹³ in 2013, which introduced a specific creative interest in the archival potential of objects utilised within a performance, and which remain, as detritus, after the live performance has ended.

This interest in the role of archival detritus was influenced by my reading of Matthew Reason’s writing on performance and documentation. Reason’s paper, *Archive or memory? The detritus of live performance* (2003), and the development of his argument in his book *Documentation, disappearance and the representation of live performance* (2006), introduced into my creative research a curiosity about the “archive of detritus” (Reason, 2003:88, emphasis mine) and the “archive as detritus” (Reason, 2006:54, emphasis mine). By ‘detritus’ Reason refers to the final tableaux of discarded objects, remaining onstage, once a performance has ended. Reason suggests that these ‘archives of detritus’ constitute “the shaky and incomplete evidence of what happened” (2006:54). In this sense, the detritus does not constitute any kind of accurate, complete or comprehensive archive of what occurred, but remains as a collection of what Philip Auslander calls “indexical access points” (in Allen, 2010:63) where the object becomes a “site of performance in itself” (2010:63). Through their

¹² *Retrospective – altered daily* was a site intervention project presented at the Dance Umbrella in Johannesburg, which was performed, daily, outside of the theatre prior to each of the festival’s official performance programmes. The project involved a performer (me) dancing a reimagined version of Yvonne Rainer’s *Trio A* (1966). Each day the dance would be layered with costumes, props and/or music similar to those used in other well-known dance productions as a means to surface interesting collisions and unintended meanings resulting from a single dance, repeated the same way each day, in relation to changing visual and aural framings, sourced from the archive.

¹³ *Detritus* was created as an ensemble work exploring the potential of performance detritus as a means to remember past performances. It was directed and choreographed by myself and performed by Richard Antrobus, Indalo Stofile and Madele Vermaak, in 2013.

utilisation within the performance event, these objects assume traces of the performance encounter for the audience members who experience the event and thus become “fragmented traces prompting fragmented memories” (Reason, 2006:53).

These objects, importantly, do not reference their archival potential in and of themselves, but rather through their association with the memory of the experience by the audience member who witnessed it.¹⁴ As Jess Allen notes of all archival objects and documents, “we render [them] dynamic through our engagement ... much as we might have engaged with the performance itself” (2010:63). Stage detritus, in this instance, becomes akin to other kinds of conventional archival documents (such as photographs or video recordings), serving as a “spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present” (Phelan, 1993:146). Reason notes how this relatively overt quality of stage detritus is not dissimilar from the nature of all archives containing objects which are, essentially, user-centred.

As Christina Turner (2013:243) argues, archival objects elicit “performative constructions of the past” by those who access and use them. In light of this correlation Reason proposes the reverse conception of the ‘archive *as detritus*’, referring to the way in which the archive of detritus, as “incomplete evidence of what happened,” can be seen to “mirror the nature of the audience’s memory of the production” (Reason, 2006:54). Reason explains:

The archive as detritus turns around the presumptions of neutral detachment, objectivity, fidelity, consistency, and authenticity – instead claiming partiality, fluidity, randomness, and memory. And having abandoned claims to accuracy and completeness, such an archive is able to present archival interpretations, proclamations and demonstrations, consciously and overtly performing what all archives are already enacting: dumb objects not allowed to speak for themselves, but spoken for. (2003:88)

In both conceptions Reason articulates the important role played by those objects which remain after the ephemeral moment of the performance has passed. These objects, although remaining as the discarded debris of the event and not the event itself, have undergone a transformation through their utility in the performance event and, as such, “[present] an

¹⁴ In this way, these objects can only hold this significance for audience members who witnessed the original. The question of how these objects might hold archival reference for those who have not experienced the original is one that is explored in this research practice and is discussed later in this chapter.

‘archive’ able to create and re-create the multiple appearance of the performance” (Reason, 2006:53).

This archive bears a close association with memory, where memory is “recreated each time we revisit it” (Reason, 2003:87) through engagement with the object – which is not dissimilar to the way in which “the archive’s construction of the past is recreated each time it is accessed” (2003:87). Beatrice von Bismarck explicates this assertion by noting:

Archived materials transform independent of their nature and materiality into objects that are never fixed but always in a state of becoming. While they encapsulate the history, experiences and meanings of their former contexts they transform in the process of being used, of appearing in new relations with other objects, persons, spaces and discourses. (2013:216)

Reason’s notion of the ‘archive *as detritus*’ thus brings to the fore the close association between the archive and memory, positioning both as transformative, changing, fluid systems implicated in processes of metamorphosis and re-creation. This is essentially a challenge to reified understandings of the archive as a form of “proper memory” (Reason, 2003:86), where the archive’s emphasis on documentation, capture and authoritative preservation becomes a replacement to memory through its ‘promise’ of “enabling a more accurate, objective, and accessible memory of live performance” (2003:85). By understanding the archive as a collection of detritus – as objects that hold only fragmented traces of the event that are actualised only through our engagement with them – the centrality of memory in the archival process is reinforced, despite the perception of memory (from the perspective of the archive) as unstable, unreliable, and unempirical.

Reading Reason’s arguments, I was reminded of something I had experienced while performing an earlier work, *Retrospective – altered daily*, where, on several occasions, audience members had expressed a sense of pleasure by being reminded of their experiences of watching the original dances, even though what I had performed was markedly dissimilar to the original works. This implied to me, that although the dance I performed was vastly different from any of the original dances referenced visually, the engagement with their (notably fake) detritus was enough to surface a memory of an experience years earlier.

This observation reveals a further layer to the way in which performance detritus functions within the archive as an initiator of memory and interpretation. In *Retrospective –*

altered daily, the majority of the detritus is unabashedly fake. The objects, which make no attempt to feign authenticity, operate more as intertextual referents to the original detritus, and yet, through this intertextual affiliation appear to have potential value as archival objects capable of initiating memory. Sibylle Peters (2002:124), writing on the archival value of forgeries in the visual arts, argues that fake art objects gain archival value through their departure from the original and thus become ‘authentic’ as archival records of time. The forgery, although not created by the hand of the original artist, becomes valuable as an archival object through its reference to the original, separate from the artist who made it. So while the relationship between a forgery and an original is an important distinction to make in an arts economy, where monetary value is typically associated more with the artist than the artwork itself, in archival terms, both the forgery and the original arguably have potential value, as both have capacity to spur, hold and convey memory of a past moment. In *Retrospective – altered daily*, as well as my other explorations with performance detritus, these fake objects do not, importantly, feign authenticity nor seek to obscure their difference as forgeries. Instead, these objects overtly perform their difference while still also seeking a connection to the original through memory and association, which is then complicated by this difference.

Similarly, attaching archival value to the forgery further undermines the promise and appeal of the archive as an access point to the past. As Reason notes: “This ability to touch items and objects from the past is, in itself, one of the key attractions of the archive” (2003:84). Echoing Helen Freshwater’s (2003) ‘allure of the archive’, Reason identifies the “seductive identity” (2003:84) of the archive that is closely connected to the assumed authenticity of its objects. Derrida (1995) has famously likened this seductive quality to a kind of ‘archive fever’ emerging from a subconscious desire to weave and re-weave archives together, compelled, Derrida argues, by “an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia” (1995:91). However, it is important to acknowledge that the authenticity of an archival object is often conferred by the archive itself. Fake objects, through their inclusion within the archive, assume authenticity and value and, although forgeries, are able to function as access points and indices when engaged with by the user.¹⁵

¹⁵ Anecdotally, to further illustrate this point, I am reminded of an experience I had as a 17-year-old attending a school trip to a Leonardo da Vinci exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery. After gawking excitedly at the

These ideas regarding archival objects, stage detritus and archival forgeries, as well as their dynamic relationship with memory, became the departure point for the creative research process in making *Detritus* and, two years later, *Detritus for one*. Both processes explore the role of fake detritus as a choreographic device for the elicitation of embodied memory, in the creative process, as well as its role, in performance, as a means to recreate and re-enact memories of past encounters with performance. Both processes thus explore the question: How can the memory of a past performance be re-enacted, differently, through creative engagement with its detritus?

Towards micropractice: thinking through/about/with things

As noted in the previous chapter, the creative processes of making *Detritus* and *Detritus for one* occurred prior to the commencement of formal doctoral study and, as such, formed the basis of my entry (theoretically and in practice) into anarchival research and understandings of the anarchival. While making both works, anarchiving, as a creative research methodology, was not a field of enquiry I was overtly aware of nor consciously working within. My research interest was purely in questioning, through choreographic practice and experimentation, ways in which one might *perform* an archive of live performance. Retrospectively, it is clear that these processes can be described as anarchival since both are actively aimed at engaging the “excess energy of the archive” (Massumi, 2016a:7) by actualising something new through a performative and creative engagement with the traces of the old. Similarly, the initiating impulse in both processes – to engage with archival objects as sources for creative imagination – is essentially an anarchival one.

In making *Detritus* I collaborated with three professional performers over a period of four weeks in August 2013. The performers and I worked collaboratively through improvisational and task-based play, using their own memories of experiencing past performances (as spectators) as well as creative engagement with various objects sourced from these experiences, in an attempt to experiment with various ways of retelling and re-enacting these memories differently. A conscious decision was made to rely solely on the performers’ memories and not to refer to formal archival sources as a means to validate the

Mona Lisa on display, I was informed on the bus ride home that what I had seen was not the actual painting but a revered forgery. In that moment, however, I felt like I was encountering *the Mona Lisa*.

accuracy of the remembered events. The process of creating this work revealed several potential performative strategies for re-enacting past performance. However, the short nature of the creation process in this phase of the project meant that these emergent approaches could not be fully explored and they became an aspect of the research that warranted deeper interrogation. For this reason, I decided to revisit this work, reframed as a solo, body-centred research practice, in 2015.

Developing the research process in this second phase, I began by identifying significant or lasting memories of watching live performance. The source productions for *Detritus for one*, which also then became the departure points for a series of micropractices, included South African choreographers Nicola Elliott's *Fragile* (2012) and Mamela Nyamza's *19 Born 76 Rebels* (2013), as well as works of two French choreographers, Phia Mènard's *L'après-midi d'un foehn* (2008) and Dominique Boivin's *Transports Exceptionnels* (2005). I further clarified the emergent strategies from *Detritus* into three more-focused intentionalities: *Recounting* – as a desire to retell or describe (physically and/or verbally) a remembered experience; *Re-enacting* – as an attempt to recreate (physically and/or verbally) the action of a remembered encounter; and *Re-imagining* – as a means to reimagine a new encounter through the creation of a moving image involving detritus.

In the process of making *Detritus*, this third strategy had been understood in quite a broad (and admittedly vague) way, as a kind of Artaudian becoming¹⁶ – a moving, constantly evolving, nonrepresentational and affective encounter with an object as a means to manifest an essence of the remembered moment. This was clarified in the second process and reconceptualised as a moving image. My thinking around a moving image may be explicated through Lepecki's understanding of reduction and distillation as choreographic practices evident in the work of various contemporary European choreographers. In his paper, *Concept and presence: the contemporary European dance scene* (2004), Lepecki makes reference to an "unnamed" (2004:179) movement of choreographers (including Jérôme Bel, La Ribot, Xavier le Roy, Vera Mantero and Meg Stuart among others) whose formation and characteristics he describes. Lepecki proposes reduction, combined with an overt emphasis on the body and its material and physical presence, as a "major mode of operation" (2004:179) for these artists.

¹⁶ Antonin Artaud describes becoming in *The theatre and its double* as a way for theatre to "break with topicality" so as to express "elements of truth hidden under forms" (2005/1938:51).

Choreographically, this reduction is understood as “a reduction of the expansive, of the spectacular, of the unessential” occurring alongside an emphasis on the performing body’s “bareness” and “massively complicated presence” (2004:179). Reduction is thus closely related to distillation as a process of removing all but what is absolutely necessary in order to arrive at the essence of a thing (a feeling, a memory, an emotion, an idea, a question). This thinking positions the moving image as a pared-down embodied action, in time and space, resulting from a process of reduction, in order to distil an expression of an essence.

My understanding of the moving image has also, subsequently, been developed through Del Rio’s (2008) analysis of Deleuze’s writings on affect and the “movement-image” (Deleuze, 1986/1983) in cinema. In both *Cinema 1: the movement-image* (1986/1983) and *Cinema 2: the time-image* (1989/1985), Deleuze uses cinematic analysis as a means to develop ideas about time, movement and our perceptual experience of reality that extend beyond the realm of cinema and are relative to our embodied encounter with the world. So while Deleuze and Del Rio consider the movement-image in relation to cinema and not live performance, their propositions are suitably applicable to moving images that are “occurrent” (Massumi, 2011:3) and thus live.

In cinematic terms, Deleuze proposes a re-conception of filmed images as ontologically *moving* rather than a series of connected still images. Deleuze argues that the nature of movement as that which is constantly in-motion and changing over time (and thus becoming), dislocates the image from the realm of narrative and representation and opens it up to its expressive and affective possibilities. By breaking from the representational paradigm the movement image can “escape binary determinations and established signifying codes” (Del Rio, 2008:2) and thus “restores to the body the dimension of intensity” (2008:3) that is lost when the cognitive interpretation of a static and stable image is privileged over its affective, taking-form experience. For Deleuze, as Del Rio (2008:12) explains:

The moving body is not an a priori entity undergoing a series of static poses, the reconstruction of which into a continuous flow would only reaffirm the body’s stability and unity. Rather, the aspect of the moving body that holds Deleuze’s interest [...] is its power of affection/becoming as a force perpetually in the making. Through moving and gesturing processes, the body emerges as an assemblage of virtual and actual expressions with the capacity to affect and to be affected by others.

Deleuze's conception of the movement-image is thus one that is closely associated with affect and, as such, centralises the body (of both performer and spectator) as "the site where the affective event takes place" (Del Rio, 2008:10). This encounter between the body and affect constitutes moving images as "affective-performative" forces, or what Del Rio calls "Choreographies of Affect" (2008:67), that function to disrupt narrative form and representational modes of meaning-making by emphasising "the continually changing relation and exchange between form and force, stasis and movement" (2008:68). This conception, combined and in dialogue with notions of choreographic reduction, frame the intention and understanding of the third strategy in the process of creating *Detritus for one* as a distilled and embodied assemblage of processual and multidimensional becomings.

In revisiting the process, I consciously tried to release all three strategies from any assumed choreographic intentions as a way to create room for the unknown and unplanned to emerge more fluidly within each strategy as well as in the gaps between them and through their relation to each other. Similarly, the openness and freedom from intention was conceived as a way in which to encourage my own desubjectivisation in the process by creating greater space and agency for the objects themselves to guide or influence the creation of remembered affect, distanced from the will, memory and desire of the performer. In *Detritus*, the objects were engaged with predominantly through their capacity to spur memory, coupled with an exploration of the way in which their materiality and aesthetic poetry might complicate or redirect the nature of a re-enactment. In the continuation of this process, I wanted to extend this exploration by engaging with detritus not only as objects but also as *things*.

Lepecki elaborates this distinction between an object and a thing: "Once an object surrenders (or is evacuated from) utility, once it is removed from the realm of instrumentality, from relations of subordination in regards to a subject that manipulates it [...] an object becomes no longer an object but a thing" (2012:77-78). As Lepecki's definition reveals, archival detritus (as the unorganised residue remaining after a performance) is more akin to a collection of things than a collection of objects because, by virtue of remaining, they have "passed from the realm of utilitarian commodities to the realm of useless stuff" (2012:79). Peter Schwenger, in *The tears of things: melancholy and physical objects*, describes the transformation of an object into a thing as "a sudden elevation ... to a dignity it did not possess

before” (2006:31). This transformation can be regarded as an elevation because it arguably frees the object from its oppressive relationship with the subject. As a thing an object is under no obligation to perform or be defined by its perceived utility as decreed by the subject, nor to equate its utility with its being.

The distinction between object and thing is one that also bears association with Whitehead’s process philosophy and existential phenomenology, both of which propose a departure from understandings of the world predicated on ontologies of being in favour of processual and experiential notions of becoming, or as Massumi describes, a conception of the world as “always-in-germ” (2011:6). Cartesian philosophy positions objects and all non-human matter as separate from the subject, where matter is conceived as “passive stuff, set in motion by human agents ... who impose subjective meanings upon it” (Coole, 2010:92). Conversely, both process philosophy and phenomenology recognise what Dianna Coole describes as the shared “world of actual experience” (2010:93) where matter, comprising both object as well as flesh, is understood differently as “a lively materiality that is self-transformative and already saturated with ... agentic capacities and existential significance” (2010:92). In this sense, the object is not distinct from the subject perceiving it as a fixed entity that simply *is* because it is perceived and known by the subject, but rather, both are equally implicated in processes of becoming in a “germinal reality” (Massumi, 2011:6).

In her paper, *Choreographic archives: towards an ontology of movement images* (2013), Rachel Fensham alludes to this germinal, notably motional, propensity within archival detritus, particularly those associated with the archiving of dance.¹⁷ Fensham describes a “potentiality of movement” (2013:148) that is retained within the archival object as a trace-form, and which provokes “memories and histories of interaction” (2013:153) resulting from the ways in which the object was used, moved, worn or handled in performance. As physical, unmoving things these objects thus hold and retain within them virtual traces of motion, of being moved, and of embodied interactions that are distinct from the object’s ontology as a thing as well as its utility as an object.

¹⁷ Fensham’s use of the term ‘movement image’ (while acknowledging a relational connection with Deleuze’s use of the term) refers, in this paper, predominantly to physical images of captured movement (such as drawings, photographs, documentation and stage detritus) rather than moving images as affective-performative embodied expressions.

In the process of making *Detritus for one*, the agency and motion of archival detritus, existing in trace-form in the object as thing, become springboards for exploratory micropractice. As noted in the previous chapter, a significant aspect of micropractice and the movement from one territory to another through deterritorialisation, is a necessary renegotiation of the self and of subjectivity. In each micropractice this subjugation of self is sought through a repositioning of the archival object in relation to the subject. While subjective memories of experience constitute the strata from which these micropractices depart, the role of detritus as an initiator of lines of flight to other territories allows, arguably, for an accompanying navigation of self through what Lepecki calls “an alongsideness without identification” (2012:80). In this sense, the performer and the object engage intimately with each other in time and space but where the subject also follows, listens and responds to the thing in an alongside relationality. The multiple trace-forms that constitute the object’s becoming as detritus thus also become lines of flight in exploring the re-enactment of memory.

Thinking-through micropractice: reflecting on *Detritus for one*

As noted above, the memories of experiencing the four source productions became the strata for the various micropractices. Each individual micropractice then also focused on engaging with these memory-strata through one of the three strategies, either recounting, re-enacting or re-imagining the memory in response to the relevant detritus. In each instance, fake detritus sourced from each production, was positioned as an initiator of potential lines of flight to other strata, and thus, other ways of thinking about and performing the remembered moment in the present.

The results of the three micropractices became the raw material or memory-fragments from which the event, *Detritus for one*, was comprised. From these fragments I began to experiment with combining, diluting, reducing and distilling particular elements from the plethora of potential expressions until each source production eventually had three performative vignettes connected with each micropractice. These twelve memory-fragments were then arranged and rearranged in various relationalities as a means to experiment with the possibilities of their alongsideness and the possible effects (and affects) emerging from various proximal and temporal conversations.

While the considerations of the four memory-strata and associated micropractices which follow are delineated and separated according to the specific strategy or memory involved, in performance these vignettes converge, overlap, rub up against each other and seep into one another according to a non-linear *felt logic* related to the process. Similarly, the discussion of each micropractice does not explicate its application to all four memory-strata and instead focuses on one or two vignettes, even though all four strata were explored in practice. An analytical reflection of the work as an event – as an assemblage of memory-fragments – follows in the conclusion to Part 1 of this chapter.

Identifying memory-strata: some context and what I remember

Memory-stratum: *Fragile*

I first saw Nicola Elliott's *Fragile* at the National Arts Festival in Makhanda in July 2012. Elliott describes the work as an experience (for the performers as well as the audience) of irrevocable change – the idea “that change drives us and from one day to the next, we are essentially different” (Elliott in Smith, 2012). The work forms part of an unofficial series that considers the felt experience of change, particularly in relation to loss, but where the representation of loss is eschewed in favour of a choreographic questioning rooted in performer presence and experience (Smit, 2018:64). The sister-works to *Fragile* include *Proximity: loss and having* (2011) and *Bruising* (2014) and, as a series, all three works emerge from Elliott's own felt experience of loss although they are not overtly autobiographical.¹⁸ Elliott describes herself as a “non-dancing choreographer” or a “choreographer-director” (Elliott, 2015:42) as a means of distinguishing her approach to making dance where her choreographic signature does not emerge from her own body. As such, she rarely performs in her own work and, although her work may emerge conceptually or thematically from personal experience, it is not *about* her.

Fragile is thus not about Elliott's personal experience of fragility, nor is it a representation of what being fragile might look like. Rather, it is an experiential exploration of what fragility and breakage feel like and how this feeling might manifest choreographically. Like its sister-works, *Fragile* is “less a product for consumption, and more of an experience that aims to create (subtle) shifts in one's state of being” (Hemphill, 2014:56). Elliott and the

¹⁸ All three works are influenced, in part, by Elliott's experience of losing her father who, having suffered a stroke in 2010 that left him unable to speak, passed away in 2011 (personal communication, 15 June 2018).

performers in *Fragile* work to create an event, and thus an experiential journey through loss, fragility and irrevocable change that is non-narrative and unfolds, predominantly, on a sensory and felt level.

The exploration of change in the work is largely object-focused and involves a series of encounters between human performers and the material world through engaging with physical objects. As much as the work explores human fragility, there is a concurrent exploration of the fragility of objects and the ways in which both human and object are involved in processes of breaking, destruction, construction, reconstruction and change. The work is divided into episodes, each of which involve the four performers in an encounter with objects. One performer enters the space with a large (dead) tree branch, which she begins to destroy by trying to stand on it; another performer engages with a very large, very clean, piece of white paper which crinkles, rips and tears the more he uses it; a third performer tries to dance with a heavy and unwieldy, blue Pilates mat; in a fourth episode, the performers arrange numerous black plastic chairs into a large, towering abstract sculpture in the centre of the stage. Throughout the duration of the work, Elliott's mother sits quietly on a chair in the upstage right corner, knitting a scarf out of red wool.¹⁹ She is visually present throughout the entire work and the sound of her knitting is subtly augmented through a lapel microphone. At the end of the fifty-minute work, Elliott's mother, having finished knitting the scarf, gives this newly made object to an audience member.

All of the objects in *Fragile* are thus transformed in some way, elevated from objects to things through the performance encounter. The performers do not use the paper as paper, nor the Pilates mat as a Pilates mat. Rather, the objects are engaged with in relation to their thingness and through an encounter that explores, predominantly, their materiality in relation to forces of change. In most cases this transformation is irreparable, where the encounter changes the thing to a point near destruction, necessitating the sourcing of new objects for subsequent performances.

The objects used by me in the micropractice for this memory include a fragment of a tree branch, a roll of newsprint paper, a yoga mat, one black plastic chair, seven metal and

¹⁹ The presence of Elliott's actual mother in the work is an element that is significantly downplayed. The audience are, for instance, not explicitly told that the older woman is the choreographer's mother.

wood classroom chairs, and six balls of red wool. In each instance, the chosen objects bear a strong resemblance to the originals, but are dissimilar enough to overtly perform their difference. The various objects thus either share a common quality (in terms of thing-materiality) or purpose (in terms of object-utility) with the originals but are aesthetically different.²⁰

Memory-stratum: *19 Born 76 Rebels*

I saw Mamela Nyamza's *19 Born 76 Rebels*, which was created in 2013 in collaboration with Faniswa Yisa, in June 2014 at the National Arts Festival in Makhanda. The work is an evocative consideration of the relationship between the past, present and future centred around the year of 1976, which is both the year in which Nyamza and Yisa were born as well as the year of the infamous Soweto Uprisings, where protests regarding the poor education of black children in apartheid South Africa resulted in police violence and death. Nyamza states that the intention of the work is to emphasise how "we are repeating what we were fighting against" (in Kamaldien, 2013), that the battles the previous generation of youth were fighting continue to be fought by their children and grandchildren. Alude Mahali, in her analysis of this work, concurs:

Though the uprisings belong to the past, the event and its surrounding circumstances, have left after-images wrought with pain, anger, distrust and questions, including what did those schoolchildren fight for and (why) are we still fighting? Perhaps we have not learnt from history. (2015:40)

By 'after-images' Mahali refers to those feelings and sensations that remain after an event or occurrence has passed that are "primarily produced by memory and the imagination" and involve "the emotional or psychological recall/re-imagining of something that is not immediately present to the senses" (2015:36). These 'after-images', importantly, are set off both by memories of the past as well as the experience of present inequalities.

Mahali uses the after-image as a lens through which to consider Nyamza's work and, specifically, the way in which her use of choreographic and physical images, through resonating with the past as after-images, create meaning and experience for the spectator.

²⁰ For example, while Elliott uses numerous identical black plastic chairs, I made use of only one similar chair in conjunction with many other chairs that do not look like the originals, but were similar in that they were still (as objects) chairs.

Like many of her other works, such as *Hatched* (2009), *Isingqala* (2011) and *De-Apart-Hate* (2016), *19 Born 76 Rebels* is not a linear narrative or story but rather a progression of moving images and encounters (with objects, architecture, other bodies and aural scores) which question, subvert and scratch at socio-political issues as a way to “initiate change for the better” (Nyamza in Van Straaten, 2016) by provoking conversation about socially relevant subjects. Mahali has also noted the personal, often autobiographical, nature of Nyamza’s work where experiences related to the artist’s multifaceted identities as a queer woman, mother and black African dancer underpin her choreographic questioning, and where the interrogation of these identities through performance unfold as a kind of “(un)becoming” (Mahali, 2016:9).²¹

The work begins with Nyamza and Yisa carefully approaching each other across a courtyard from a distance.²² They wear elaborate costumes and stand on large coffee tins that are attached to each foot as a kind of stilt. Nyamza wears a long, conservative, Victorian dress with a blue and orange skirt and orange jacket, accessorised with a Union Jack bowtie. The colours, which strongly reference the old South African flag, and the bowtie, bring into the visual image clear signifiers of both colonial and apartheid histories. Yisa’s dress is similarly long and elegant but coloured predominantly in green, black and yellow, referencing the colours of the African National Congress (ANC). While standing on the stilts, Nyamza’s body begins to gesture nervously and her lips twitch and tighten. She forces a beaming smile at the audience as if to say ‘all is well, everything is fine’ but the smile is unstable and interrupted by nervous twitching as Nyamza’s face seems caught between fearful panic and the need to appear happy and in control. Yisa and Nyamza walk towards each other – balancing carefully on their tins – while Joy’s popular 1980 hit song, *Paradise Road*, plays around them. They lean in to kiss each other but, in moving forward to make contact with their lips, use counterpoint in the rest of their faces and bodies so that the only physical parts moving closer are the lips as everything else pulls away in the opposite direction.

²¹ Mahali writes here in reference to Nyamza’s *Hatched*, which she analyses in terms of its ritual-like nature through Arnold van Gennep’s (1960) study on rites of passage. The processual becoming and unbecoming observed in this particular work, I suggest, recurs in many other works by Nyamza and is an element within *19 Born 76 Rebels* in particular.

²² The work is site-adaptable and has been performed in many different environments. Both versions I have seen were performed in outdoor public spaces – on a roadside pavement in inner-city Cape Town, and in Makhanda, in a high school courtyard.

During this encounter, two German Shepherd police dogs are held on leashes by two handlers on the periphery of the playing space. They watch the performers and at times, bark and growl. Following this encounter both performers remove their dresses to reveal schoolgirl outfits underneath. As they undress they seem highly cautious of the dogs. The two performers back slowly away from the dogs, who bark aggressively at them, and sit down on a large piece of paper on the floor, behaving in a manner reminiscent of frightened school children. They begin to scribble on the paper, count out loud in Afrikaans and offer their hands to an imaginary teacher as if to be punished. An oversized book appears and the two 'children' interact with it – sometimes reading from it, sometimes climbing underneath it.

Many things happen in the work and the performers engage with a wide variety of objects in the form of props and costume apparel. Images unfold as the performers journey through different physical activities associated with their memories of their younger selves learning Afrikaans at school and their older selves still unable to comprehend the continuing injustices in the education of poor, black youth. Two moments in particular stayed in my memory as I watched the performance in Makhanda, namely the precarious, unwilling balancing-act of the two women's awkward embrace and the aggressive, violent reaction of the dogs to both performers. The objects used as detritus in reference to these particular moments include a roll of newsprint paper, one Ricoffy coffee tin, a stuffed-toy dog and a recording of Joy's *Paradise Road*.

Memory-stratum: *L'après-midi d'un foehn*

While *Fragile* and *19 Born 76 Rebels* both engage with a range of diverse objects, the other two works informing this research process engage with fewer objects but in a notably different way. *L'après-midi d'un foehn*, which was created by French performance artist, Phia Mènard, of Compagnie Non Nova in 2008, is less a dance with objects than a dance *by* objects. The work is a playful reimagining of Vaslav Nijinsky's 1912 ballet *L'après-midi d'un faune* to a score by Claude Debussy.²³ The shift in Mènard's title from *faune* to *foehn* indicates a thematic move away from a mythological creature to something more directly related to the movement of wind.²⁴ Unlike Nijinsky's ballet, the work has no direct story and, instead, is more concerned

²³ Debussy's score, titled *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (1894), and Nijinsky's ballet were both inspired by a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé.

²⁴ A foehn or föhn is a dry, warm wind that blows into Europe from the Mediterranean (Jennings, 2014).

with movement and dancing that are the direct result of wind. I first saw this work at the National Arts Festival in Makhanda in July 2012.

The work unfolds progressively as a performer introduces small, differently coloured plastic packets (that have been re-fashioned into the shape of little people) into a circle of electric fans. Debussy's score begins to play as the packets are released one by one. The changing gusts of wind created by the fans (which are manipulated by 'wind designer' Pierre Blanchet), sweep the packets into the air where they dance, airborne and across the floor, with each other and by themselves as soloists. The intention of the work, as stated by Mènard, is to arouse and provoke fantasy, magic, imagination and delight from an unexpected and mundane object. Mènard asks:

What if we humans, firmly anchored to the earth, could also escape gravity, free at last to flirt with the wandering breezes, to be transported aloft in an aerial waltz? And what if, with reckless abandon, we gave in to the urge to explore uncharted territory, to venture into the unknown and make each of our limbs an independent, uncontrolled part of ourselves? (in Huard, 2015)

As Mènard's two questions suggest, the objects in this work assume human relationality to become sites of human longing. The objects are twice transformed through their re-fashioning into human-like forms and then through their unique dancing, which is at times remarkably human while simultaneously beyond the scope of human capability.

Theatre critic, Luke Jennings (2014), notes, "Much of the pleasure is reflexive. Watching ourselves being transported by plastic bags. Seeing just how easily these despised products of consumer culture can be invested with a choreography of freedom and joy." The detritus in *L'après-midi d'un foehn* is thus imbued with far more archival significance than most stage objects, because they *are* the performance. The packets do more than hold traces of the memory of a physical interaction with a dancer – they hold traces of the dance itself, in their materiality and their ability to dance 'freely' and with 'joy' in the wind. In exploring the re-enactment of this work in *Detritus for one* I used two, plain white plastic packets (with differing textures and thickness), a small electric fan, disposable overalls and a recording of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*.

Memory-stratum: *Transports Exceptionnels*

Like Mènard's *Foehn*, Dominique Boivin's engagement with an object in his work *Transports Exceptionnels*, presents an instance where a physical object, in this case a mechanical excavator, assumes (beyond) human relationality and significance through its transformation into something more in performance. Created in 2005, Boivin's *Transports Exceptionnels* is a romantic and epic *pas de deux* between a man (dancer Phillippe Priasso) and a machine (a mechanical excavator). I first saw the work in London in 2007 and again, in 2008, at the Johannesburg Dance Umbrella.

Boivin and his company Beau Geste are well known for their decentralising of the human dancer in relation to non-human performers in the form of props, lighting, and music (Ertem, 2012).²⁵ Boivin explains:

What interests me is giving life to a machine, turning it into a dancer – just like animating a puppet – attributing emotion to a[n] it so that the audience can see it as a romantic and classical dance. While the machine is a part of everyday urban life the human remains vulnerable, fragile. The relationship between these two bodies is seen as a vast construction site where nothing is stable. Just like love. (in Ertem, 2012)

Performed to a recorded score of Maria Callas singing Camille Saint-Saëns' 1877 opera, *Samson et Dalila*, the dance between Priasso and the excavator evokes a strong sense of love and companionship. Despite its limited movement capabilities, the machine's choreography is nuanced and surprisingly human in its tenderness while simultaneously more-than-human in the sheer scope, magnitude and spatial range achieved through its towering size and the enviable reach of its single, jointed 'arm'. Dance blogger, Moira de Swardt (2008), describes the encounter in a way similar to my own experience of the work, as "a tender, passionate and moving love story, where man and machine are briefly equal despite the difference in bulk and power. This, like love, is dangerous stuff."

As a means to re-enact this work in the process of *Detritus for one* I used two objects as detritus – a remote-controlled toy excavator and a recording of Maria Callas singing *Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix* from Saint-Saëns' opera.

²⁵ As Ertem (2012) notes, Boivin trained under American choreographer Alwin Nikolais who, from the 1950s, revolutionised American modern dance through his highly visual work which often positioned the dancer and the dancer's body in subordination to the manipulation and movement of theatrical elements such as elaborate sets, props and costumes.

Micropractice one: recounting experience

In the recounting strategy, I attempt to describe to the audience several of the moments I remember from watching the four works. In the research process, recounting was initially explored through practices of freewriting, where I would write, in as much detail as possible, all that I could remember about the event and how it made me feel while experiencing it. Similarly, improvised verbal descriptions of each memory were performed for an imagined spectator, using the various detritus to illustrate and demonstrate what I could remember. Non-verbal descriptions were also explored as a way to corporeally describe or physically demonstrate the events with an object but without actually re-enacting the action itself – that is, trying to maintain a first-person perspective as an onlooker rather than imagining myself inside the event as a performer. While all four of the vignettes, or memory-fragments, created through this micropractice evolved from an encounter with detritus, only two of these actually incorporate the detritus into the performed vignettes themselves.

As *Fragile* and *19 Born 76 Rebels* both make extensive use of different objects in performance, a direct engagement with these objects (as detritus) in recounting my experience was effective in providing a foundation of context for the audience. Conversely, as both *Foehn* and *Transports Exceptionnels* use less of a variety of objects in performance, an embodied, physical demonstration of the object was pursued, emerging from an encounter with their detritus, but not actually featuring these objects themselves.

In recounting *Fragile* and *19 Born 76 Rebels* the performer (me) uses various objects, which are removed from a large metal trunk at the back of the stage, as spurs to memory.²⁶ For instance, a short wooden stick is revealed while being verbally described in relation to the original object (in *Fragile*) to the audience: “it was kind of like this, only it was bigger and longer and it had branches. And it was really, really beautiful, it wasn’t just ... a stick.” The performer then tries to break the stick in half to demonstrate the way in which the original performer used the object, but it does not break and the performer sheepishly accepts this failure and moves on to the next object. Similarly, the performer attempts to demonstrate

²⁶ I remind the reader here that the use of both first person and third person perspective is intended to reflect the desubjectivising of the self within anarchival micropractice. As such, when reflexively describing certain moments from the performance works, third person narration is preferred as a means to distinguish myself (as the performer) from my voice as the author.

Nyamza's walking on the coffee tin, but with only one tin he is unable to properly replicate the exact action. Both vignettes develop through similar encounters with other objects: a roll of blank newsprint paper, a blue yoga mat and a stuffed-toy dog. All of these objects are verbally acknowledged as less-than those to which they refer, and in each instance, the performer fails in some way to engage with the object in the correct manner. After using each object, these items are either discarded in the space or they are placed carefully on one of the classroom chairs that are arranged on the perimeter of the stage and displayed.

In recounting *Foehn* and *Transports Exceptionnels* the description of each memory is centred around the correlation between each production's objects and their human-like physicalities. As the performer does not use the actual detritus in these vignettes, he attempts to embody these objects in his own physicality through mimicry of the dynamic, weight and movement qualities of the two objects – moving like a plastic packet and like a digging machine. The mimicry of the object's materiality is combined with a gestural dance vocabulary that loosely correlates with the actual words the performer is saying. None of the movement in these two vignettes is actually sourced from the works themselves but rather combines with the verbal description to physically demonstrate the materiality and motion capabilities of the objects being described.

All four recounting vignettes are performed in a similar, slightly manic and rushed manner, as if the performer has a limited amount of time to adequately describe these memories before they disappear. The vignettes are also quite humorous in the way that the performer is constantly faced with failure despite trying very hard to succeed. The energy and pace are driven by a piece of music (*Shake* by Steve Newman) that is played for all four vignettes through a small, hand-held CD player that the performer removes from inside the trunk, and which he has to speak over in order to be heard. The spoken text is a combination of memory-texts sourced from freewriting exercises and developed through improvisational play and is loosely scripted. The text is thus fluid and able to shift slightly in each performance to respond to the unpredictable nature of the objects themselves, the changing reactions of a live audience and the fluctuating energy of the performer.

From early on in the creative process, the recounting strategy in particular began to evoke a strong clown-like propensity in the performer. This was nascent in *Detritus* but

became a quality I actively developed in the recounting vignettes in *Detritus for one*. While all of the source works have moments of humour in them, none are overtly comedic. The recounting vignettes thus drastically depart from the original productions in terms of atmosphere, energy and feeling to create a series of encounters with memory and detritus that are more directly concerned with conveying information and context regarding the remembered events than any kind of felt evocation of the works themselves. Dramaturgically speaking, the fun, energetic, and fast-paced efforts (and failures) of the performer-clown serve to entice the audience into the world of the work and establish a relationship and familiarity with the performer, who addresses them directly.

An initial concern that emerged in the creative process was a question regarding the necessity of the audience's own familiarity with the source productions: How important was it that audience members had seen, or knew about, the productions I was remembering and to what extent would the existence of their own memories affect their experience of my own remembering? The playful, forgetful and relatively sincere attempts at recounting the productions are thus understood as having two dominant intentions in relation to this question: to provide key information, context and details about the remembered productions and to invite the audience into the world of the performance through a light-hearted, notably human, demeanour. Three reviewers of the work suggest an effectiveness in this regard in their experience of the work. Siya Ngcobo describes how the work "captivates the audience, with some of us even starting to believe we might have seen the original" (2015). In a similar way, theatre critic, Steve Kretzmann writes:

Although Parker has created a performance about performance, art about art, there is no solipsist slip into academia, instead there is humour and engagement as he takes us on a journey of reconstruction [...]. Neither did we need to be familiar with the performances he re-enacts. Although I had heard of some of them, I have seen none. There's no presumption on Parker's part, he holds out his hand and I accompanied him willingly. (2015)

Maira de Swardt notes, "I nodded and grinned in recognition and delight. When he came to the work I had not seen, I understood the essence and fascination" (2017). These responses to the work seem to articulate a feeling of inclusivity and connection with the performer as well as a sense of experiencing a journey through memory.

Micropractice two: re-enacting experience

While the four recounting vignettes share a common energetic and stylistic form and intention, the re-enacting vignettes for each work differ significantly from each other and function separately in the re-enactment of memory. Within this micropractice the re-enacting strategy typically involved an assumption of the original performers' roles and actions with particular objects *as if* I was them, explored through improvisational play. This often entailed an embodied searching for a physicality, performance quality, atmosphere or intention similar to those remembered in the original encounter. In this way the approach to this strategy is essentially moment-centred, in that it explores the re-enactment of particular moments, images, or fragments from the original works rather than a holistic or complete re-enactment of the works themselves. Underpinning all of the creative exploration is an openness to the object's particular materiality and uniqueness as a thing in and of itself, acknowledging each object's difference from the original objects as I remember them. In each instance, this difference of the actual object initiates a reimagining within each re-enactment.

The re-enacting vignette from my memory of *Fragile*, for example, comprises a palimpsestial layering of two images sourced from the work on top of each other to create a moving image that differs from the source image but still bears strong resonances with multiple moments from the work. The image developed from a moment in the process where I was trying to re-enact Elliott's building of a chair sculpture. Whereas Elliott's performers use identical black, plastic chairs, I was using metal and wood chairs typically used in South African classrooms. The different materiality of these chairs, in terms of size, shape and texture, shifted the aesthetic of the image to the extent that, once constructed, the sculpture strongly resembled the tree branch used in an earlier moment in the performance. This led to an exploration of re-enacting that image, which involved a performer trying to break the branch by standing on it, but with chairs. In combining these two images together, a composite and layered image emerges.

As a moving image this vignette thus involves the careful and considered construction of a branch-like sculpture made from several chairs that are linked and balanced precariously on one another. Once the sculpture is complete the performer carefully climbs on top of it and attempts to walk across the structure. As the sculpture is unstable, it moves as the weight

of the performer shifts. The journey of the performer is thus visibly (and viscerally) treacherous as he moves with caution and concentrated care. Once the performer reaches the mid-way point on the structure, he carefully lies down to find a position of rest on the unstable surface. The image develops further as the performer, once prostrate, begins to insert himself inside the sculpture – his limbs seeking out gaps and pathways in-between the structure. Once fully enmeshed with the objects, the performer’s body softens, exhales and becomes still (see Figure 1)

In each performance this moving image unfolds differently because the encounter is not precisely choreographed. The construction of the chair sculpture is different each time the action is performed, and as such, the chairs behave and move differently as the performer engages with them. Performing the image thus requires an acute listening and real-time conversation with the chairs. While this exact image does not occur in *Fragile*, the live encounter between two fragile objects (the performer and the sculpture of chairs, as well as the new image and the fragile memory of the original) elicits potential feelings of loss, desperation, danger, struggle, futility and fragility, similar to those sensations I recall experiencing as an audience member, as the moving image unfolds over time.



Figure 1: Alan Parker in *Detritus for One*. Photographer: Suzy Bernstein.

In re-enacting *Foehn*, the strategy of recreating a moment *as if* I was the original performer is complicated by the fact that the human performer in this work is decentralised in relation to the object. Whereas I remember experiencing absolute awe at witnessing the transformation of a plastic packet into a dancer, this feeling is re-enacted through a reversal of this transformation, where the human body of the dancer is transformed into a packet – or, from a different perspective, the packet is transformed back into a human. Using the Debussy score, one small electric fan, a white overall and a packet, the performer in this vignette tries to re-enact, albeit differently, the physicality, dynamic, quality and personality of a dancing plastic packet. The performer wears white overalls and a white plastic packet over his head as a means to resemble the people-shaped packets in the original work. The re-enactment begins with the performer lying on the ground in close proximity to an electric fan, which is not plugged in and does not produce any wind. As Debussy's score plays through the theatre's sound system, the performer begins to move gently, with very small movements in the hands and feet as if being caught in a gentle breeze. As the vignette progresses the performer's movements become bigger and more dynamic, but always formed through extreme physical release and fluidity, trying to capture the light, boneless and unpredictable physicality of a packet being blown in the wind.

The re-enacting of *Foehn* thus tries to elicit a similar child-like wonder but through a transformation of the human performer's body into an object through the assumption of its material and thingly properties. Although the actual choreography is not technically difficult, the vignette itself is challenging to perform because of the slippery, illusive nature of the packet's physicality and the fact that the performer is unable to see anything, and thus orientate himself spatially and in relation to other nearby objects. During the process it became evident that the lack of vision, although challenging, was helpful in embodying the freedom and joy of the packet's physicality, which required a conscious and physical letting-go of any fear of disorientation or collision and to freely follow the impulse of the wind irrespective of any consequences. These impulses, of course, were imagined because there is no actual wind choreographing the dance. It was crucial, however, that in performing the vignette, the impulse of being blown by (imagined) wind initiated movement rather than dancing predetermined actions, because the absence of cognitive agency is a fundamental quality of the packet's unique physicality – that *it* does not move, *it is* moved.

In re-enacting *Foehn* the assumption of the nature of the detritus is thus conceived as a kind of becoming – of performer becoming packet. In this way, each performed repetition of the vignette, like the re-enacting of *Fragile* discussed above, had to be approached anew each time, as a unique event and as a process of actively sensing, listening, searching and becoming. Becoming-packet, in this instance, resonates with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of becoming-animal which, they suggest, "is never imitating" (1987/1980:305).²⁷ If becoming is understood as a processual encounter of co-composing forces, intensities and affects (as noted in the previous chapter) then becoming-animal infers a co-composing of affects between a human and an animal body. As Cull notes, while imitation of an animal's movements and sounds does not constitute becoming, becoming-animal "may well begin with some kind of imitation" (2012a:124). Cull suggests that imitating animal behaviour can open up, or lead to, "a more fundamental production or creation of an intensive experience" (2012a:124) that moves beyond mimicry of an animal as an organism (from a detached defining of that animal from the perspective of the subject) towards "a set of relations, a field of forces or a complex of powers to affect and be affected" (2012a:124). Becoming-packet, in this instance, is conceived in a similar way, where the physicality and movement of the performer constantly seeks alterity through conversation with the qualities, forces and intensities of the plastic packet.

Although emerging from two separate memories, both of these moving images depart from their respective memory-strata through a re-thinking of what re-enactment is and what a re-enactment might do. Both can be seen to re-enact a feeling that the source production elicited but through an interaction between body and object that differs from the remembered images themselves. In both instances the objects redirect the re-enacting in other directions and towards other forms, while continuing to maintain archival associations to the memory-strata.

Micropractice three: re-imaging experience

While the re-enacting vignettes can be seen to depart from the specificities of the originating memories, these departures emerge from a micropractice that seeks to re-enact. Conversely,

²⁷ The concept of becoming-animal is introduced in Deleuze and Guattari's *Kafka: toward a minor literature* (1986) but is developed in the chapter 'Becoming-intense, Becoming-animal, Becoming-imperceptible' in *A thousand plateaus* (1987/1980).

the third micropractice of re-imagining is underpinned by a will to depart, by creating new images that resonate with each memory but differ in their actuality. In this way, re-imagining is understood as a letting go of remembered action while maintaining a desire to re-create remembered affect and feeling, but differently.

During the process, re-imagining often involved the temporary suspension of the memory-strata and embodied play with the various objects based on the unique materiality of the actual things over their intertextual associations. This included the creation of moving images that often had no relation at all to the source memory but emerged through the object as a container of virtual traces. Similarly, the suspension of the memory also allowed for images and conversations to arise between objects sourced from different memory-strata, creating encounters between things that had not existed before in any of the original performances.

The re-imagining vignette emerging from my experience of *Fragile*, for example, is not a recreation of any actual moment in the work. In the vignette, the performer sits on a black plastic chair, facing the audience, imagining that he is sitting in the auditorium watching the performers perform *Fragile*. As the imagined bodies move, the performer's eyes move with them, tracing their movements while his body reacts physically to the imagined action and imagined kinaesthetic impulses. The performer begins to speak a memory text that describes his experience of watching the work: "I remember walking into the theatre. It was a lot like this one actually. I was sitting over there." As the performer proceeds to list the things that he remembers, he continues to react physically to imagined impulses occurring on the stage. After a short while the performer reaches underneath the chair and removes one of several balls of red wool that are hidden there. He unravels some of the wool and throws the remaining ball over his shoulder, creating a pathway of red wool on the floor between himself and wherever the ball lands. This action is repeated five or six times while the performer continues to describe how he remembers feeling.

In Elliott's *Fragile* the performers do not throw wool, and as an object, the wool is not overtly featured in the work until its transformation into a scarf at the end. As such this is not a direct reference to an existing image, but a poetic rendering of my experience of watching the work, relayed through a moving image involving a chair and red wool. The final moment

in the image – of a body surrounded by several pathways that lead in multiple directions but to no clear destinations – potentially recreates a feeling I remember having – of feeling lost, unbearably alone and physiologically, corporeally, fragile.

A similar manifesting of feeling through re-imaging occurs in remembering *19 Born 76 Rebels*. In performance the re-imaging vignette of this work emerges from its re-enacting. While balancing on a coffee tin, the performer slowly turns around to face the audience and smiles widely as *Paradise Road* plays through the theatre sound system. Like Nyamza's original image, the smile begins to twitch, quiver and falter as if the performer wants to speak but cannot find the right words. His facial expressions continually shift back and forth between a forced smiling, building panic, and overt fear. The performer begins to slowly lift both hands, a gesture that seems, at first, apologetic, then defensive and later a sign of surrender (as if being held at gunpoint). Once his hands are above his shoulders the performer then begins to sway his arms from side to side, dancing awkwardly as the chorus of *Paradise Road* plays. From this point the vignette shifts from a re-enacting to a re-imaging. The physicality of the performer begins to slowly transform as his fingers fold inwards to resemble claws, his shoulders hunch, and his face forms into a teeth-bearing snarl. As the song continues to play the performer becomes progressively more dog-like, growling and snarling as he finds his way off the coffee tin and onto all-fours on the ground, where he begins to bark ferociously, fighting against an imaginary leash, pulling closer and closer to the audience (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Alan Parker in *Detritus for one*. Photographer: Suzy Bernstein

The first part of the image is notably similar to Nyamza's original in terms of physical action and gesture, although different potential interpretations, references and feelings arise. In *19 Born 76 Rebels* Nyamza is performing the behaviour in the guise of a white person, dressed in the colours of apartheid and British colonial rulers. When I re-enact this moment, the image is significantly altered by virtue of the fact that I am a white person. Where Nyamza assumes a guise of whiteness in order to comment on the past (and present) interrelational dynamics between black and white South Africans, I embody whiteness, visually, through my skin as a socio-cultural signifier. Mahali (2015:48) describes a "material knowing of blackness" that is central to Nyamza's work and its interpretation by other people of colour, where a "physical knowing of a black woman identity" plays a fundamental role in the way in which Nyamza's images are understood and how particular feelings, sensations or affects are evoked. As a white South African, my experience of Nyamza's image is framed by a markedly different perspective and a physical knowing that is disparate from the one from which she performs.

In re-enacting this image I thus perform from the perspective of my own whiteness, and more specifically, from my subjective remembered experience of how Nyamza's image made me feel. The re-enactment is thus conceived as a re-enacting of a subjective, felt moment that was spurred by Nyamza's image and not a re-enactment of the original image itself. This shift in perspective is heightened as the vignette develops into a re-imaging and the performer begins to transform from a panicked and apologetic white man to an aggressive, predatory dog-like creature. This is not an image that occurs in Nyamza's work as I experienced it,²⁸ and instead results from a feeling and, in particular, a resonance and connection I felt with the dogs themselves. Mahali (2015:44) notes how the dogs in *19 Born 76 Rebels* reference both apartheid police dogs as well as Nyamza's own personal memories of these dogs at her school during periods of political unrest. My experience of Nyamza's encounter with the dogs, however, is more connected to my own childhood memories of having a German Shepherd as a family pet who was a gentle and loving animal that would turn, very quickly, into a snarling and barking creature when a black person would come to the door.

²⁸ In a version of *19 Born 76 Rebels* performed in 2014 at the ICA Live Art Festival in Cape Town, Nyamza did in fact include two white male performers who were held on leashes and behaved like dogs and who, in addition to the actual dogs, barked at her during a moment in the piece. When I first saw the work it did not include human-dogs.

In re-imagining this felt connection to the dog I transform into a dog-like creature, a hybrid monster comprised of two animals that have a propensity for aggressive violence – a white man and a wild dog. The physical transformation into this creature is considered more than a mimicking of a dog's physicality and, in transforming into the creature, I try to manifest (physically, vocally and energetically) anger, hatred, and sheer animalistic aggression. Toward the end of this vignette, the creature is pulled away from the audience by its imaginary handler, where it sits, like a dog, next to the stuffed-toy dog, used earlier, and positioned on one of the chairs. This close proximity of human and object captures, spatially, the incongruous nature of my experience of Nyamza's image, where an animal I subjectively associate with childhood comfort is simultaneously recognised as a dangerous and frightening part of cruel, unjust and violent socio-political histories in which I am, by virtue of my whiteness and privilege, complicit.

In both of these vignettes, a moving image is explored as a means to re-create and manifest a feeling similar to the felt experience of the moment but through an embodied transformational becoming that is not directly linked to the actual images and actions of the original production. Similarly, in both re-imaginings the actual detritus is again engaged with through its difference. In *Fragile*, the red wool arguably becomes a potential symbol of positive change, through its creation into a scarf, transformed and gifted by Elliott's own mother. In *Detritus for one*, the wool is engaged as a thing, disconnected from its utility as a raw material for the creation of something, and encountered in a way that is nonrepresentational and thus symbolically open-ended and fluid. Similarly, the stuffed-toy dog, which departs entirely from Nyamza's actual dogs but more closely references my subjective association of German Shepherds with childhood comfort, becomes a point of contrast and thus ambiguity. The transformation of the performer into a dog-like creature, its aggressive relationship with the audience and the verbal recollection of the dogs' actual presence in Nyamza's work, all contradict the visual and material difference of the actual object – thus manifesting a similarly incongruent emotional, sensorial and cognitive experience to that which I remember.

Assemblage, memory and affective-performance

In their combination with each other, the various memory-fragments and moving images emerging from these micropractices create a non-linear, non-narrative collage of moments

and events, forces and becomings that can best be described as an assemblage. Like the anarchic share, discussed in the previous chapter, an assemblage (as theorised by Deleuze and Guattari in *A thousand plateaus*) is a constellation of multiplicities, of forces and affects, bodies and territories and shifting intensities. An assemblage is thus a volatile taking-form, composed of changing, moving parts, where strata are deterritorialised and then reterritorialised by making connections and actualising capacities where previously there were none. While each micropractice, in relation to each of the four memory-strata, presents a journey away from memory to somewhere else, these deterritorialised spaces cross-converse through the performance of the work as an assemblage, creating new connections with each other and with the various memory-strata through processes of reterritorialisation.

Del Rio describes the application of assemblage theory within cinema as a form she terms “affective-performance”. The function of affective-performance, she argues, is two-fold. Firstly, it provides a “constantly fluctuating distribution of degrees of intensity between two series of images: those belonging to explainable narrative structures, and those that disorganize these structures” (2008:15). Secondly, Del Rio argues, affective-performance has the ability to “perform unforeseen connections between bodies or concepts and between their capacities” (2008:16-17). In *Detritus for one* both of these functions are engaged through the work’s unstable taking-form as an assemblage and an anarchic sharing of experience and memory. The recounting vignettes, as already stated, predominantly serve a narrative function through their efficacy in providing context and information about each event, relayed through narrative storytelling. These are also complemented by a prelude which occurs at the beginning of the event. Once the audience has entered the theatre, the performance begins with the performer on stage trying to remember a gestural dance. The dance evolves as an accumulation, getting longer and more complex as the performer remembers it. At a point in the dance the performer begins to forget and the accumulated phrase begins to fragment and eventually disappears.

Following this dance, the performer addresses the audience directly, welcoming them and explaining what he is trying to do. He remarks:

I would like to try and share with you four experiences that I have had watching performance. These dances have already disappeared, as all dances inevitably have to,

and so they exist only in my memory. But I would like to share them with you. Or at least, I'd like to try.

The prelude thus implies a narrative journey through a representational paradigm which functions as an entry point into the assemblage that follows, offering the audience an initial pathway they might follow before that pathway intersects, shifts, disappears and meanders toward other places and paradigms during the performance as an assemblage. Alongside the recounting vignettes, the danced prelude is intended to establish a secure territory to depart from so that both performer and audience can coexist in the assemblage. Moving forward the audience thus has a series of clear narrative or representational threads that become disorganised as the work unfolds.

Within the assemblage itself, the logic of transition and connection between one vignette and the next is, however, fluid and felt rather than constructed. The moving images themselves, as already discussed, tend to unfold as non-representational becomings and thus complicate, break and disorganise the dominance of any of these narrative structures or inclinations. At times two vignettes might combine (as with *19 Born 76 Rebels*) where a re-enacting evolves into a re-imagining or where a re-imagining of one memory-stratum becomes a re-enacting of another, with no logical or clear indication to the audience that these are technically different processes and different memories.²⁹

Similarly, the work is rhizoidal and palimpsestial in its stratification and layering, where connections between memory-strata, objects and moving images evolve laterally and extemporally rather than chronologically. For example, the audience experience re-enactings of *Foehn* and *Transports Exceptionnels* before either of these memories are recounted or explained to the audience. The work thus has a form as a constructed pathway the audience journey along from one unfolding image to the next, but as an assemblage, this journey is also loose and open so that multiple connections can emerge fluidly over time. An encounter in the present moment can also have multiple potential resonances with other encounters yet-to-come and to those that have already been experienced and have passed into memory. As each object emerges from the trunk they also remain in the visual and experiential frame, continuing as remainders (and reminders) of past actions, as after-images of recent

²⁹ For example, following the re-imagining of *19 Born 76 Rebels*, *Paradise Road* continues to play as the performer begins to construct the chair sculpture in re-enacting *Fragile* and thus becomes a part of the image.

encounters but also as ‘after-after-images’ of the memory-strata themselves, thus holding traces and potentials for unplanned, unintended, and “unforeseen connections” (Del Rio, 2008:17) to emerge.

Conceived as an assemblage, the work also acknowledges that the bodies of the audience are experientially active in the multiple becomings of moving images where their bodies, forces, affects and memories enter into composition with the forces, affects and memories of the performer, and of the objects themselves. In this way, as much as the performer is involved in a process of moving away from original memories toward new expressions, so too are the audience multiplying these pathways through their individual embodied encounters with each moment, creating connections where there were none and finding resonances with their own memories, felt experiences and remembered affects. In their reviews of the work both Kretzmann (2015) and Ngcobo (2015) describe an emotional embodied response resulting from the experience of the work. In both instances the reviewers describe a physicalised emotional expression, but not a specific emotion. Kretzmann describes being “moved to tears as [Parker] invoked a strange pathos, possibly through the invocation of hidden childhood memories when inanimate objects – toys, teddy bears, a porcelain giraffe – were imbued with a character of their own.” Kretzmann tries to make sense of his emotional response through the association of the images with his own nostalgia and melancholic memories of childhood experiences with childhood objects. *Detritus for one* is by no means a ‘sad’ work (as an overriding atmosphere) and the memories themselves, explored through the various images, are not necessarily sad either. The desire to cry that Kretzmann and Ngcobo articulate, and which many audience members experienced,³⁰ can be understood, I suggest, as the body’s actualising of affective intensities but where the embodied reaction is not emotionally motivated but manifests as an emotional response.³¹

As an assemblage, the work thus explores the recreation of remembered affect and, in so doing, re-creates an experience of affect that extends beyond the memories and body of the subject to include a multiplicity of other bodies, memories and remembered affects. While the source productions explore feelings of human fragility, childlike-wonder, love and social

³⁰ I make this statement on the basis of experience gained through performing the work. It was fairly common, at the end of the work, for me to hear audience members crying.

³¹ As noted earlier, affect is understood here as that which lays the foundation for emotion, or where the experience of emotion results from the microperception of affect.

injustice, the performed re-remembering of these encounters expand these to a multiplicity of other, new potential affects and feelings in excess of the subject's memories and the object's archival traces.

But what of the subject?

In the final moments of *Detritus for one* the performer inserts himself into the sculpture of chairs as a way of becoming detritus. The houselights come up to reveal the stage as an "archive of detritus" (Reason, 2003:88), littered with discarded stuff, including the inert body of the performer, as the audience leave the theatre. The transformation of the body of the subject into an object occurs, in a similar way, in two earlier vignettes. In re-imaging *Foehn* and *Transports Exceptionnels* the performer undergoes a similar transformation, becoming object in relation to the object, which becomes subject.

In re-imaging *Foehn*, the performer removes a plastic packet from his pocket which he scrunches into a tight ball and places on the floor and then steps away. The performer and the audience watch as the packet begins to un-scrunch itself and find a different form. The movement of the packet is subtle and small as it tries to find release from its compactness and return to its original shape. Once the packet has found its own stillness, the performer switches on the nearby electric fan which provides a gust of wind that the packet responds to by traveling slowly across the floor. Similarly, in re-imagining *Transports Exceptionnels* the performer places a remote-controlled toy excavator on top of the trunk and, kneeling behind it, watches the toy perform a dance solo to the sound of Maria Callas singing through the theatre sound system (see Figure 3). In both of these encounters, the performer actively removes himself from the moment by reducing his presence and agency to a visual proximity. Although the performer is involved in the encounter and the visual frame, his role is as a witness to a performance by the object. While the remote-controlled excavator is technically being operated by the performer, this action is masked by the trunk and thus appears as though the toy moves of its own volition. The dance by the digger is also not pre-choreographed and unfolds differently each time, in response to the music and to the unseen instructions provided by the performer through the remote control, which he operates blind – that is, without looking at his hands.



Figure 3: Alan Parker and digger in *Detritus for one*. Photographer: Suzy Bernstein

In both of these encounters, and in the final moment of the work, the renegotiation of the subject-object relationship which underscores all of the moving images, emerges as a reversal where subject and object transform from one to the other and hover somewhere in-between. By becoming subject the transformation of the object extends, I would suggest, beyond becoming thing to something more-than-thing, assuming a unique subjectivity and agency. Similarly, as the subject continually subjugates to the objects around him, I would argue that he undergoes a progressive desubjectification through the unfolding of the work until, eventually, he is rendered object.

Lepecki (citing Deleuze) proposes: “if the status of the object is profoundly changed, so also is that of the subject,” which urges him to ask “*once an object becomes no longer an object but a thing* – then what does a subject become?” (2012:77-78, emphasis in original). Lepecki articulates here the relational transformation of the subject and the object, where the elevation of the object elicits a concurrent transformation of the subject, which he argues, presents a “tremor, a gap or opening in the field of possibility” (2012:90). This field of possibility resonates strongly with Brunner’s suggestion of the need to submerge oneself through “strategic self-surrender” within archival research processes as a means to “enter beneath the surface and beneath the apparatus of identitarian capture” (2016:69). In this way,

the shifting dynamic between subject and object, revealed in this research process, becomes, I suggest, something more than a choreographic problem concerning re-enactment and the archival value of memory, to ask questions about epistemologies and accepted ways of thinking about and knowing the world and the relationships between the past, present and future. On one level *Detritus for one* presents an assemblage of subjective memories and experiences connected to a single self that, through its sharing, becomes something substantially more than a re-enacting of past moments, to ponder, on another immanent level, our understanding of ourselves and our time-space encounters and co-becomings with the material world.

The relational transformation of the subject-object dynamic and its potential effects are considered further in Part 2 of this chapter through an analysis of two recent performance works by Steven Cohen and Dineo Seshee Bopape. In both works, objects can be seen to play transformative, subversive and notably agentic roles in a rethinking of the past through a self-actualising of affective-performative potentials and possibilities.

PART 2: AFFECT AND THE DISRUPTION OF KNOWLEDGE

The research process of making and performing *Detritus for one* exposed two particular realisations that appear fundamental to an anarchival encounter with archival objects. The first realisation concerns the intimate relationship existing between affect, as an excessive and synaesthetic force distinct from (and existing prior to) emotion, and the destabilising of the subject-object divide within anarchival investigation. The second realisation, emerging from the first, concerns the efficacy and import of affect as a means to disrupt knowledge and knowledge systems, particularly those systems that privilege and centralise the subject through Platonic and Cartesian thinking.

In his often cited essay, *The autonomy of affect* (1995), Massumi provides an in-depth discussion of affect and its workings by mapping the contributions, intersections and developments of thoughts and ideas about affect emerging from thinkers such as Bergson, Spinoza, Deleuze and Guattari. In the essay Massumi acknowledges the relationship between affect and subjectivity through his distinguishing (after Spinoza) of affect from emotion. He

suggests that emotion, unlike affect, “is a subjective content, the socio-linguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal” (1995:88). Whereas affect is understood as an “intensity” that is “not exactly passivity, because it is filled with motion, vibratory motion, resonance” (1995:86), emotion emerges through the subject’s need to make sense of and personalise the experience of affective intensity. Massumi explains, “Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. It is intensity owned and recognizable” (1995:88).

Affective intensity, prior to emotion, can thus be understood as that which operates outside of the self, where a departure from subjectivity, what Deleuze has called “desubjectivation” (in Cull, 2012a:119), is necessary for affect to be felt beneath any emotional state or realisation. As Cull has argued, affect is “that which disorganizes subjects and destratifies voices” (2012a:128), and as such, is something that can be approached through processes of becoming where the body is “disorganized, fragmented” (2012a:119) and thus able to enter into an encounter, or composition, with other affective forces.

Towards the end of his argument Massumi also acknowledges the value of affect as that which has potential to shift thinking, by thinking differently, or more broadly, to discover new knowledge and new ways of existing and operating in the world. He proposes:

Affect holds a key to rethinking postmodern power after ideology. For although ideology is still very much with us, often in the most virulent of forms, it is no longer encompassing. It no longer defines the global mode of functioning of power. It is now one mode of power in a larger field that is not defined, overall, by ideology. (1995:104)

In this sense, affect, for Massumi, represents a field of possibility where power can be radically questioned and reconsidered outside of existing, inherited ideological (and thus cultural and political) systems, specifically through its break with semantic, semiotic and symbolic understandings of knowledge through language, what Jacques Lacan (2002/1966) calls the ‘symbolic order’. Conversely, affect, Massumi argues, is “marked by a gap” (1995:84) between content and effect, content and form, and between intensity and effect, as “a state of suspense, potentially of disruption” (1995:86) that “enables a different connectivity, a different difference” (1995:85).

What Massumi, and his philosophical predecessors, allude to here is the potential of affect, as a kind of thought and a way of thinking, to (re)generate and (re)produce new insights and knowledge without reproducing and regenerating those structures and systems that, historically, have held power. In *What is philosophy?* (1994/1991), Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge affect as being an integral part of artistic thinking, which they identify as one of three kinds of thought (in addition to philosophic and scientific thinking) capable of creation. As Anthony Uhlmann explains:

The three forms exist as three separate planes. The philosopher creates concepts on the plane of immanence; the scientist lays down functions on the plane of reference or coordination by creating figures or undertaking partial observations; the artist creates affects or sensations on the plane of composition by describing percepts. (2009:60)

Uhlmann later points out that, for Deleuze, “art should affect rather than be understood” because in understanding, that is, in seeing and feeling recognisable and familiar emotions, “the audience fails to see beyond the familiar and so are unable to be astonished by affects which are unknown to them” (Uhlmann, 2009:63). An experience of affect through performance, on the other hand, arguably allows for a different kind of thinking, occurring in the gaps within the symbolic order, that allows the audience, as Cull asserts, opportunities for “embodying new ways of being in time and, in doing so, exploring how we might extend or otherwise alter our human powers of perception and sensation” (2012a:110).

In addition to perceiving and sensing, Cull asserts, in her paper *Performance as philosophy: responding to the problem of application* (2012b), that live performance, as a particular kind of artistic thinking, also produces philosophic thinking (relegated by Deleuze to the plane of immanence) through the creation and composition of affect, or what she calls “living meaning” (2012b:23), in a kind of “immanent theatre” (2012a:1). Cull’s assertion here correlates closely with Cvejic’s (2015:16) notion of “the thought of the performance”, discussed in Chapter Two, by recognising the capacity of a performance to think and produce meaning that is distinct from the thought of the maker or performer.

Toward explicating these two realisations further and as a means to consider, more closely, the specific ways in which affect might initiate a disruption of knowledge, Steven Cohen’s *Put your heart under your feet...and walk!/To Elu* and Dineo Seshee Bopape’s *Sa koša ke lerole* present two enlightening performative case studies for analysis. Both works, I

suggest, represent instances of archival investigation where affect is explored through a rethinking of the position of the subject (and of subjectivity) in relation to the object. Like *Detritus for one*, both of these performance works emerge from a creative and exploratory engagement with archival objects and manifest as assemblage-like events in their sharing with, and for, an audience.

Although these three works might appear similar in terms of their common archival intention, which Foster (2006) would describe as an 'archival impulse', each work, I suggest, approaches the destabilising of the subject through processes of desubjectivation in markedly different ways and towards different ends. Unlike *Detritus for one*, however, the works by Cohen and Bopape both hold a unique association with an object-oriented, non-performative art industry and, in their form, can be seen to straddle the border between the exhibiting of art objects and live performance. Cohen's work, for instance, while clearly recognisable as a live performance event also manifests under the title *Put your heart under your feet... and walk!* as an exhibition of art objects.³² These objects, created by Cohen over a period of five years (2013-2017), have also been exhibited at the Stevenson Gallery in Johannesburg in November 2017, following the first performance of the work, in France, in July 2017. The objects, which are displayed within the gallery, are the same objects that (re)appear on the stage during Cohen's performance.

In a similar way, Bopape's *Sa koša ke lerole*, which was presented at the 2017 National Arts Festival in Makhanda after Bopape was awarded the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Performance Art, is more of an immersive installation of displayed objects than a performance and does not, for instance, feature any *live* performers at all.³³ Installed in the circular Gallery in the Round at the 1820 National Settlers Monument,³⁴ the work, although billed and framed as Performance Art, contains only objects, in the form of photographs,

³² The title of the exhibition omits the dedication '*To Elu*' which is used only in relation to the performed work.

³³ I use the word 'live' here to denote the absence of actual, corporeally present performers. The installation does, however, include live performers through mediated and mediatised forms (such a video and recorded sound). These performers are live in the same understanding of liveness that Philip Auslander has argued for, where mediatised performance evokes a liveness that is different to live performance (rather than in opposition to it). See Auslander (1999).

³⁴ The 1820 Settlers Monument, in Makhanda, was originally built in 1974 to commemorate early British settlers in South Africa. The monument is a building housing a theatre, several galleries, offices, restaurants and rehearsal spaces. In 2019 a process to re-name the monument has begun but, at the time of this submission, its new nomenclature is unconfirmed.

written documents, memorabilia, digital video and recorded sound. The only actual corporeal presence in Bopape's performance is that of the audience/onlooker/visitor who enters into the installation.

Despite their similarities in terms of intention and a perceived object-focused form, both works are markedly distinct in their engagement with affect and, as this discussion will reveal, can be seen to use affect, differently, as a means to question knowledge and where the disruption, subversion, and expansion of thought occurs in notably diverse and nuanced ways.

Between object and the subject

I have experienced Cohen's *Put your heart under your feet... and walk!/To Elu* on two separate occasions. The first was in March 2018 at the Dance Umbrella in Johannesburg, where Cohen performed the work in the Wits Theatre, a relatively large performance space, at the University of the Witwatersrand. My second encounter with the work was in a much more intimate setting, at the National Arts Festival in Makhanda in July 2018. In this iteration, Cohen performed the work in the Guy Butler Theatre at the 1820 Settlers Monument, but in a reversed staging with the audience sitting in what would normally be the theatre recess, thus positioned in much closer proximity to the performance, which occurred on the stage. The work was created, alongside the exhibition of art objects, in response to the death of Cohen's long-time partner and collaborator Elu Kieser, who died in July 2016.

Cohen describes the project as "a work about passion without asking for compassion, and about the weight of a load of emptiness carried alone" (2017:7). Cohen's description points to two interesting aspects of the work that relate to its engagement with affect. Firstly, Cohen articulates a chasm between passion and compassion, where 'passion' (as an intensity of feeling) is positioned on a level of content, as what the work is about. Conversely, Cohen describes the desired effect of the work in the negative – as 'without compassion' – thus leaving a gap, from the perspective of intention and desire, for the audience to feel anything specifically related to the content. This is not to assert that Cohen does not want the audience to feel anything at all, but rather that he recognises a disconnection between what he feels (in performing the work) and how this might be experienced and felt by the audience. By

desiring to express passion without (expecting) compassion, Cohen articulates a desire to establish and explore a defamiliarised relationship with the spectator, occurring in the gap between content and effect, where a performed expression of the intensity of grief does not automatically imply a desire for a particular, or expected, response from the audience in the form of sympathy, pity or empathy. His intention can therefore be understood not as a performing of emotion (grief, loss, sadness, loneliness) where the audience feels these emotions in communion or compassion with Cohen, but rather, an embodied encounter with the intensities of feeling and sensation (affect) where the audience are able to feel or think anything. The second part of Cohen's description reiterates this focus on affect *before* emotion and, more specifically, on the intensities of corporeal sensation connected to affective forces. Rather than describing specific emotions at the core of his experience in losing Elu, Cohen describes, instead, its contradictory affective forces: of carrying, of weight, of heaviness, and of emptiness.

These contradictory forces emerge in the performance through a series of moving images, often involving Cohen engaging with large and small objects, and through a series of digital recordings which depict Cohen in several different locations, at different moments in time, spanning a period from the days after Elu's death (while Cohen was performing in Japan) to the present moment of performance. The work takes the form of an assemblage where each image and encounter unfolds according to a non-linear, anti-chronological logic, and remains in the space, creating the potential for a multiplicity of connections, conversations and pathways between each object and each image.

The objects that Cohen uses in the performance are largely archival, and are either sourced from the detritus of past works from his repertoire or are found objects (such as antiques) that reference past historical contexts.³⁵ Cohen's objects could be categorised into three groups: exhibition objects, scenographic objects, and digital video objects. The exhibition objects include over a hundred small sculptures which are arranged in a grid-like pattern on the floor of the performance space.³⁶ Each sculpture is comprised of a satin ballet

³⁵ These include Nazi and apartheid memorabilia, ballet shoes, vintage jewellery and apparel, religious iconography and the bones/body parts of various dead animals.

³⁶ The catalogue for Cohen's exhibition at the Stevenson Gallery lists 108 individual sculptures (Cohen, 2017), however not all of these are used in the performance. The size of the grid is relative to the size of the stage, and as such, the number of sculptures needed to complete the grid is variable.

pointe-shoe that is attached, in various ways, to another object, thereby creating a thing. These objects are predominantly found objects, collected by Cohen from antique stores and the *Braderie* (an antique fair held annually in Lille, France where Cohen resides), as well as archival detritus from past works created by Cohen and Elu.³⁷

The scenographic objects are larger in size and include costume-objects worn by Cohen in the work as well as set pieces that decorate the downstage-right area of the performance space. Costume-objects in the work include a pair of typically high and unwieldy shoes (a recurring feature in Cohen's performance art practice) that are made out of two child-sized, white coffins, as well as a heavy wooden and metal tutu constructed out of four antique record players. Both costume-objects also have archival significance as objects that have origins in other works in Cohen's repertoire.³⁸ Set-objects at the foot of the stage include an ornate antique table and chair, surrounded by various, equally ornate, candelabras.

The digital video objects used by Cohen include six videos, which are projected in full scale on the back cyclorama of the stage space. These include the video work, *Tattoo* (2017), which depicts the tattooing of the title of the performance onto the sole of Cohen's foot, as well as *Fat* (2017) and *Blood* (2017), which both show Cohen dancing in the context of a cattle abattoir. The other three archival video works include a recording of Cohen dancing alongside the Blood Pond (a red-tinted hot spring in Beppu City, Japan) as well as another depicting Cohen's burial in dark soil, both of which were filmed and created in Japan.³⁹ The final archival digital object used in the work is a short section from *Broken bird* (2001), a public intervention and video work, created and performed by Elu in collaboration with Cohen.⁴⁰

³⁷ For example, the sculpture entitled *Cows horns* (Cohen, 2017:43) depicts three cow horns previously used in Cohen and Elu's collaborative production *I wouldn't be seen dead in that!* (2003), arranged on the pointe-shoe in a swastika-like fashion. Similarly, the sculpture *Elu's shoes* (Cohen, 2017:49) is comprised of Elu's own pointe-shoes with a wind-up music box attached to each toe. One music box is from Elu's performance *Munk/Punk* (2004), the other from an early work-in-progress version of Cohen's *Coq/Cock* (2013).

³⁸ Cohen uses a small white coffin in his work *The cradle of humankind* (2011), created in collaboration with Nomsa Dlamini (Smit, 2015:6). In the work Cohen and Dlamini use the coffin as a storage object from which they remove various other objects. Similarly, the record-player tutu was originally created for a durational performance Cohen performed in 2013 in Rouen, France.

³⁹ Cohen notes, in the catalogue to the performance and exhibition, that he was performing in Japan the moment that Elu died (2017:9). Cohen's recordings of himself dancing at the Blood Pond and being buried alive, were recorded following news of Elu's death and were created for performances Cohen presented in Japan shortly after Elu's passing.

⁴⁰ *Broken bird* (2001) is described as "an essay on freedom" (Hodgkiss, 2003:67) and depicts Elu, wearing a bird cage as a head-piece, dancing in pointe-shoes, in the streets of central Johannesburg.

Throughout the performance, Cohen, as the subject, is surrounded and dwarfed by these many object-presences and the various histories and pasts that they represent and which exist within them, in trace form. Cohen acknowledges the agency of these objects as an innate characteristic, and as something that greatly influences his making of things, through the joining of multiple objects to create a new thing, as well as his performed, embodied encounters with them. He describes the process of creating the sculptures as being guided by the objects themselves, where “the objects speak. The objects decide which ones are useful, which ones to reject. They call me, they present themselves. They say, look at me, want me” (Cohen, 2017:90). On performing with these charged and energised objects Cohen asserts:

For me objects are not dead matter. Objects are alive. Objects have got spirit and soul. In Japan, if you have a doll, you can't throw it away; you have to take it to the temple to be consecrated and sacrificed, because you have imbued the object with life, with love, and it's no longer dead matter – it has a soul. I feel that way about objects. I think that objects carry energy and have energy. It's not just the energy attached to the objects, it's also the energy in the object. These objects are personal objects, most of them, and for me they also represent rituals, like the time Elu gave me that because we had a fight, or to remember an anniversary ... For me all that is in the object, and that's why I work with objects – it's not like plaster and concrete; it's things with stories, with histories, and with secrets. (Cohen, 2017:30, ellipsis in the original)

In engaging with the objects in performance, Cohen can thus be seen to approach each encounter through a desubjectivising of his self and subjectivity. Although the various objects hold significance for Cohen and represent, collectively, the absence of Elu, Cohen subjugates this subjective understanding of each object in favour of an encounter that privileges the object and the object's agency.

Cohen thus engages with each object not through the performance of its meaning or significance for him, but through an embodied and temporal encounter that explores the materiality, energy and affective forces of the object onto the subject. When Cohen enters the stage for the first time, for instance, the stage is awash with objects, both material and digital. He enters slowly and carefully, balancing precariously on the visibly heavy and high coffin-shoes. He uses two very long crutches to assist him in keeping balance and to help hold his weight while he struggles to lift each foot, navigate the shape of the coffin in taking a step forward, and then carefully places the foot down again. He is careful as he moves slowly from the wing toward centre-stage, wary not to step on the maze of comparatively tiny sculptures arranged on the floor. The task appears physically arduous and, although clearly a struggle for

Cohen, is simultaneously delicate and emphatically cautious. Although Cohen appears giant-like atop his very high shoes, his actual presence in this moment is markedly small. The large projected image of Cohen dancing near the Blood Pond dominates the visual frame and the physical space is so full of objects that Cohen's human presence, feels quiet, unassuming, almost insignificant in comparison to the loud, dominating voices of the objects.

In a later image Cohen wears the record-player tutu which is held, suspended by chains, beneath a large metal structure. Cohen crawls into the tutu from underneath so that the garment can hang, heavily, on his shoulders, held by two metal straps. As Cohen detaches the chains and accepts the full 38kg weight of the tutu, the physical strain on his body is both visible and palpable. Cohen turns each of the four record players on to create a cacophony of conflicting, layered sound. He then steps off the stage and enters into the auditorium, moving slowly under the weight and strain of the object. He approaches the front row of the audience and also ascends into the aisles, rotating slowly in circles as a way to temporarily privilege one of the four songs to those audience members in close proximity to the source. As with his initial entrance into the space, Cohen again appears in subjugation to the object, his physical body bearing strain and struggle in servitude to the object's forces and intentions.

Cohen thus establishes a spatio-temporal *world* of objects, where his presence as the subject is not a dominating or oppressive force, but in service to the voices of the objects who actually speak. This world is, in many ways, a foil to reality and to the symbolic order. While Cohen can be seen to actively seek his own desubjectivation through his encounter with archival objects from the onset of the performance, this rupture between subject and object is, for the audience, a destabilising fragmentation that Cohen continues to encourage throughout the hour long duration. As with many of Cohen's past performances, which span a twenty-year period, he turns to the abject as a performative tool to further question, subvert and, indeed, disrupt the oppressive power of the subject and thus create an environment conducive to the experience of affect.

Between affect and the abject

The presence, and prevalence, of the abject in postmodern and contemporary art and performance practices is a widely documented and theorised area of performance studies, art

history and art criticism, where both artists and theorists have expounded the power of the abject as a transgressive force capable of disturbing boundaries, conventions, taboos and social constructions of ethics, identity and order (Bick, 2010; Cashell, 2009; Johnson, 2013; Kimmich, 1998; O'Reilly, 2009). Abjection, as thoroughly theorised by Julia Kristeva in *The powers of horror: an essay on abjection* (1982), refers to the disruption and destabilising of constructions of identity, system and order when the subject is confronted with the abject – the “not me. Not that. But not nothing either” (Kristeva, 1982:2). As Allison Kimmich explains, the abject (as that which emerges from the subject but is seen as its other), disrupts and disturbs constructions of identity and order precisely because it is “neither subject nor object” but instead, “floats between the two” (1998:224). She further suggests that the reason the abject is able to destabilise “subject formation” is because its in-between, composite (and thus ambiguous) being reveals the distinction between Self and Other and between subject and object as a fragile, constructed and ultimately dissolvable system (Kimmich, 1998:224). In abject art, and in performances involving the abject, this capacity of the abject is often used to elicit “dis-identification” (1998:223), which Kimmich describes as a process of defining, or understanding, the self “beyond and against normative identity categories” (1998:223), where artists seek to “internalize the qualities which mark them as Other and imagine new models of subjectivity” (1998:225).

Artist and researcher Sonja Smit observes a similar construction of alternative subjectivity in Cohen’s broader body of work. She suggests, “Cohen’s work can be described as abject in that his work often involves using his own body and bodily processes to challenge social norms and reveal his own marginal experience” (2015:2). However, Smit notes a shift in Cohen’s engagement with abjection in his later works, and in particular, within his collaborative performance with Nomsa Dlamini, *The cradle of humankind* (2011). Whereas in earlier works, such as *Jew* (1998), *Limping into the African Renaissance* (1999), and *Taste* (1999), Cohen positions himself as the “abject outsider” (2015:5) who drinks his own enema (*Taste*), bleeds (*Jew*) and dances with prosthetic limbs (*Limping into the African Renaissance*), in *The cradle of humankind*, Smit suggests, Cohen practises a different “resistant strategy” (2015:3). She argues that the overt transgression and engagement with the abject in Cohen’s earlier works “seeks to overthrow the symbolic order” (2015:3). Resistance, as evident in *The cradle of humankind*, she argues, is more concerned with the subversion of the symbolic order

“from within” (2015:3), where Cohen is less an abject outsider and more a subversive subject inside a fragile and constructed system that abjection is both a part of as well as its potential disruption.

Put your heart under your feet... and walk!/To Elu involves a similar resistant approach to abjection. In the work, I would suggest, Cohen is not the abject outsider existing on the margins of the symbolic order. Nor does his encounter with the various objects involve his own abject. Rather, Cohen works to problematise his position as a subject by creating a world of abjection around him, grounded in the “utmost of abjection” (Kristeva, 1982:4) – the corpse. Cohen’s world is rife with images, reminders, and affects of the bodies of the dead as being enmeshed with the bodies of the living. The undead objects speak constantly of the dead, while his living body battles under the weight and forces of the dead. This is a subversive realm typified by a resistance to the hierarchy of the conventional, separatist and vertical relationship between subject/object/abject, where these become, instead “horizontal and equivalent” (Kimmich, 1998:225), indistinguishable and conflated.

While this conflation of the subject, object and abject occurs continuously throughout the work, there are three moments in particular where Cohen distils this resistant conflation to a palpable potency. The two digital video objects *Fat* and *Blood*, depict Cohen in elaborate drag make-up, black leather heel-less (hoof-like) boots and a white tutu, dancing inside a cattle abattoir. In the first video (*Fat*) Cohen moves around the hanging, dead carcasses of cattle, stripped of their heads, hooves and skin. He hangs from a meat hook, mimicking the corpses around him, and gently caresses the fatty flesh of the dead animals. While Cohen performs, the workers in the abattoir continue about their business, often visible in the camera’s frame. In *Blood*, Cohen dances in a metal trough above which a freshly slaughtered cow hangs. The trough, which is intended to catch the blood as it drains from the dangling corpse, fills with blood and sinew, as Cohen sits and lies down beneath the dead animal. Blood trickles from the corpse and runs down Cohen’s face and arms until he is covered with blood, almost completely red. The video also includes footage of living cattle, held in an enclosed metal structure, positioned near the trough in which Cohen sits. The metal enclosure’s function is to tip the animal over so that it can be slaughtered, which it does with a very loud, very violent, metallic sound. While Cohen is bathed in blood the sound is often heard in the background, as animal after animal is tipped over and killed. Cohen’s body can be seen to flinch each time

the sound is heard. As with *Fat*, the video, at times, also includes the workers in the background. During one moment in the eight-minute video, a worker is seen in the background sawing off the head of an only-recently slaughtered animal. The two videos are difficult to watch, and in both performances of the work that I saw, many audience members covered their eyes.

The videos are certainly horrifying – separately as well as in conversation with each other – and are disturbing for the audience to watch for many reasons. The depiction of death and of dying is, for many, *too* real, *too* gratuitous and *too* cruel. The workers and their machinery are cool and detached in their expert killing, presenting a stark and unsettling contrast to Cohen’s mournful, quiet grieving. There is also an uncomfortable ethical dimension to both films that surfaces through the juxtaposing of Cohen’s dancing body (as a white, ‘male’ and privileged artist) in relation to the exclusively black bodies of the workers who continuously labour behind him.⁴¹

From my perspective as an audience member, the most disturbing aspect of the two videos emerges through their hard-hitting revelation of the absurdity of the subject-object-*abject* vertical system that positions “the thinking subject capable of designating things, animals, and people as objects of scrutiny or, worse yet, as outcast and *abject*” (Kimmich, 1998:224). In *Fat* Cohen seems to perform a sameness with the corpses that hang around him, as he himself hangs from a hook and then later approaches the dead ‘objects’ with a tenderness and care reminiscent of how a human might approach another human or nonhuman animal. This is unsettling to watch because the viewer recognises the animal as dead, an object that has now become *abject*. This horror is then augmented by *Blood*, shown later in the work, where the dead corpses from the previous film are now shown as alive, living but not-quite-subject, remaining always-object, and then are killed, becoming *abject*.

Surrounded by death and dying, Cohen’s ritual of mourning in the blood-filled tank extends beyond the loss of Elu and takes on broader, more ambiguous, possibilities. Cohen seems to mourn for everything and everyone, for all things subject, object and *abject*, and for

⁴¹ Catherine Boule observes this ethical discomfort as emerging from Cohen’s privilege as a white, male artist who “consciously seeks out a triggering space for a work of artistic catharsis; [while] for black South Africans, traumatic triggers are pervasive, they arise unbidden” (2019:76). Boule suggests that Cohen’s presence in the abattoir thus emphasises the “still-true reality that black bodies are forced to withstand and grow accustomed to forms of violence and degradation unfamiliar to whites” (2019:76).

himself as a combination of all three. Cohen describes his initial intention in going to the abattoir:

In my head I had this idea that washing in blood is purifying. It's very Christian – washing in the blood of Jesus. Jews don't do that. But in reality it was about being contaminated [...]. Even though I had been sick I was happy to dive into the bacteria, in the hope of becoming another person ... which never happens, you know. (Cohen, 2017:130)

Cohen's intentions are thus transformative and connected to a desire to change, to become something else, through a ritual-like encounter with the abjection of death. As Cohen notes, this transformation does not occur, his baptism in blood does not effect the kind of symbolic change he desires. What does occur, I would suggest, is a brief and intangible moment of transformation of the symbolic order. By immersing himself, and his mourning, within an environment of death that is familiar to the audience, Cohen creates a moment where the affective forces and intensities of death and dying scream loudly from the projected image. The environment is both familiar and unfamiliar, as something people are aware of and encounter everyday (through the purchasing of meat products at the supermarket) but simultaneously something that is seldom witnessed and rarely felt in this intensity.

In his writings on cinema, Deleuze often acknowledges the power of this particular form to create affective intensity by breaking from narrative to reveal, through moving images, the affects beneath and between that which is cognitively interpreted. Cohen's films operate in a similar manner. By immersing himself in the sounds, smells, textures, fluids, weights, forces and feelings of death and by being enmeshed with death *as it happens*, Cohen shares an experience and understanding of dying that is felt, and beyond that, is felt in a way that abruptly conflicts with a hierarchical understanding of the subject-object divide. Cohen thus equalises, to a certain extent, the experience of dying – whether cow or human, violent or sanitised – the experience and affective intensities of dying are the same.

Towards the end of the performance Cohen lights the many candles arranged at the foot of the stage around an antique table. On the table sits a small wooden box containing the remains of Elu. Using a hand-held live-feed camera which projects onto the cyclorama, Cohen shows the audience the contents of the table, and reveals the name of Elu on the wooden box. Cohen then places the camera into his mouth and projects the fleshy, wet and meaty inside of his throat and uvula. For the first time in the work Cohen speaks. He says, "Elu's final

wish expressed to me on his deathbed was 'I want to be with you forever.' And so it shall be. 'I will always love you Elu, you are buried in me, I am your grave. And forever is so much shorter than we thought!'" (Cohen, 2017:7). Cohen then proceeds to scoop a teaspoon full of ashes and eat them. The moment is, arguably, both beautiful and horrifying as Cohen collapses subject, object and abject into a single gesture. The gesture is horrifying in the context of a vertical symbolic order, where the act is socially taboo, and beyond that, illegal. Here Cohen does not eat his own abject, but rather the abject of another subject, made object (cremains). Through this act Cohen also references his own position as an object, becoming, if only temporarily, a living tomb for the abject remains of the dead. And therein, I propose, lies the gesture's beauty.

By creating a mysterious and ambiguous world of abjection, *Put your heart under your feet... and walk!/To Elu*, I suggest, problematises an identifiable emotional response on the part of the audience. Although the title of the work indicates a connection to Cohen's personal experience of loss through its dedication to Elu the work is not *only* about Elu and Cohen's experience of loss. The journey of the work, although archival, gives the audience very little knowledge or information about Elu, Cohen or their history together. While the objects engaged with are predominantly connected to the archive in some way, they do not speak these histories nor share their traces of these past encounters with the audience. Instead, Cohen presents an experiential encounter with the affects of death, loss and grief that emerge from his anarchival engagement with them. These affects emerge through the physical weight of the costumes, through the tense and cautious pathways Cohen must walk, through his body's immersion in the dead body's abject and in the dry-mouthed, gritty consumption of hard-to-swallow ash. Cohen's demeanour in the work is also necessarily restrained. At times he utters sound in the form of soft groans or wincing when encountering physical struggle and, when he speaks, the tone is calm and measured. He is never overtly emotional.

In the concluding image of the work, Cohen removes his costume, naked except for a corset, while the stage is filled with billows of fog. Cohen dances and moves around the space, often disappearing in the dense haze. The sheer amount of fog shifts the image from being purely visual, as atmospheric or magical (as stage fog often achieves), to become something more visceral: a suffocation. In close proximity, the audience also become engulfed in the edges of the voluminous cloud and are able to feel the "carbonic gas of the fog machine"

(Cohen, 2017:27) at the back of the throat. Cohen describes the affective experience of the final image: “My lungs panic. No oxygen, a lack, breathing without air, a missing” (2017:27), thereby leaving the audience with one last sensation, of a body breathless and gasping.

Between subject and nonsubject

While Cohen’s engagement with the abject can be understood as a resistant strategy aimed at problematising the hierarchical relationship between the subject and object as a means to privilege affect, Bopape’s questioning of this relationship assumes an entirely different strategy from a markedly distinct perspective. Where Cohen positions himself as an abject outsider on the basis of his identity as Other (as a Jew and a homosexual), Bopape’s otherness and outsidership are constituted through her gendered and racial identities as a black, African woman. As noted in Chapter One, Moten has written extensively on the complex positioning of the black body within the heteronormative, white, capitalist system of the symbolic order. In the opening line of his book, *In the break: the aesthetics of the black radical tradition*, Moten states: “The history of blackness is testament to the fact that objects can and do resist” (2003:1). This resistance of the object refers to the historical positioning of the black body, through systems such as slavery, colonialism and apartheid, as a living object and nonsubject, in opposition, and thus resistance to, the oppressive power of the subject. Moten argues, however, that unlike the nonhuman animal or the non-living object, the subjugated black body, as a “speaking commodity” (2003:5) has the power to speak back to the subject and thus disrupt subjectivity through its unique “dispossessive force” (2003:1).⁴² He suggests that, “While subjectivity is defined by the subject’s possession of itself and its objects, it is troubled by a dispossessive force objects exert such that the subject seems to be possessed – infused, deformed – by the object it possesses” (Moten, 2003:1).

For Moten, black (radical) performance becomes a space in which this resistance and deforming of subjectivity can be, and is, enacted and which presents “a real chance for the philosophy of human being” (2003:7-8). Moten observes in blackness an ontological potential, where the uniquely in-between positioning of the nonsubject black identity establishes blackness as ‘thing’ – “an object without being and without value, whose very value lies in its

⁴² While all objects, arguably, exert a dispossessive force onto the subject, the nonsubject has an augmented ability to trouble subjectivity through its ability to speak back to power.

resistance to the foundations of capitalist value, being, and thingness” (Tuck, Guess & Sultan, 2014:5). As Moten clarifies:

Things are in, but they do not have, a world, a place, but it is precisely both the specificity of having neither world nor place and the generality of not having that we explore at the nexus of openness and confinement, internment and flight. Having no place wherein they abide, in the radically dispossessive no-place of the hold. [...] In the hold, blackness and imagination, in and as consent not to be a single being, are (more or less than) one. (Moten, 2013:751-752)

Radical black performance thus represents for Moten a place of possibility – a break – and thus an opportunity, as Dorota Sosnowska concurs, to “perform the possibility of the other history, of the other identity, of a different future” (2017:55).

From this theoretical perspective the absence of Bopape’s actual body, and its replacement or substitution by various nonhuman objects in *Sa koša ke lerole*, I suggest, surfaces this “un-subjective status” (Sosnowska, 2017:51) of the black body. The archival nature of this work and its objects, similarly locate this subjugation in relation to the historical exclusion of blackness and black bodies within the archive. As Sosnowska suggests, when historically-excluded black bodies engage with and perform the archive, the archive becomes “a stage where one can perform one’s own history and identity, breaking the dominant narrative” (2017:47) – a narrative that has, as Mbembe and Bogue have argued, sought to oppress and control blackness and its “vanishing subjects” who are held in the archive “without histories or names” (Bogue, 2012:34).

It is important to note here that the absence of Bopape’s body in *Sa koša ke lerole* is significantly augmented in this particular instance due to the work’s overt framing as a performance, and further still, as performance art.⁴³ Historically, performance art has been closely associated with the body of the artist, particularly through the Living Art movement (1933-1970s) in the United States, where artists used their own bodies to challenge, among other things, the saleability of the art object and to transgress boundaries between art and real life and between the artist and the artwork (Goldberg, 2001; O’Reilly, 2009). Similarly, in

⁴³ This framing occurs through the categorising of the work in the National Arts Festival programme as performance art, as well as through Bopape’s selection as the 2017 Standard Bank Young Artist for Performance Art award winner.

a more local context, all previous winners of this prestigious performance art award have, in the past, presented work at the National Arts Festival in which they themselves perform.⁴⁴

In *Sa koša ke lerole*, however, the spectator is confronted only with objects. These take the form of printed and handwritten documents, photographs, recorded video and various memorabilia that relate to the thirty-year history of the Polokwane Chorale Society – “the first and longest living adult choir in the Limpopo region” (National Arts Festival, 2017:95) – as well as various technological objects used for the projection and display of these materials, such as televisions, LCD screens, overhead projectors, light-boxes, pedestals and music stands. Bopape describes the installation in the festival programme as a “travelling museum that celebrates the contribution of chorale music to the rich cultural history of South Africa” (2017:95).

The choir, which was originally established in 1977 as the Seshego Chorale Society, has particular personal significance to Bopape. She notes that,

Having grown up with chorale music in both ears, as my father was in the choir and my mother a conductor and director for many years, it evokes my first ideas of positive representation while acting as a nostalgic memory of a community held within the music. (in National Arts Festival, 2017:95)

The archive that Bopape engages with thus emerges from a personal association with what the objects represent and from a nostalgic experience of time relating to when Bopape was a child. The (re)construction of this archive in *Sa koša ke lerole*, however, does not seek to recreate the history of the choir as a linear progression through time nor provide the viewer with solid contextual information relating to its history. Instead, Bopape engages with the various objects in an attempt to manifest feelings, sensations and affects that extend beyond nostalgia and memory through an immersive, sensorial and interactive artwork that seeks to “open new conceptual spaces in which politics of identity appear and may be worked through” (Salley, 2013:355). In this sense, I suggest, Bopape ‘performs’ by presenting her body and her (un)subjective presence through the collection of the objects themselves.

During its presentation at the National Arts Festival the work was installed in the Gallery in the Round, a circular space beneath the stage of the Guy Butler Theatre in the 1820

⁴⁴ Previous winners include Anthea Moys (2013), Donna Kukama (2014), Athi-Patra Ruga (2015) and Chuma Sopotela (2017). There were no awards for performance art in 2016, 2018 and 2019.

Settlers Monument. The space was originally designed as a machinery room for the rotation of the theatre stage above, and thus has a large concrete and metal pillar in the centre that attaches to the ceiling. Bopape's objects are predominantly arranged around the circumference of the room, either attached to the curving walls or placed in close proximity to the walls on the floor itself or on pedestals or music stands. The gallery also contains two small crevice-like spaces that break off from the circular main room as well as two entry alcoves, both of which create small spatial departures from the otherwise circular layout of the installation. The installation is recognisable as being a kind of timeline with three visible lines, made out of metal cable, that circle along the walls. There is no clear beginning to the timeline and no discernible end point. Along the various pathways of the timeline Bopape places a plethora of images, maps, photographs, bits of text, newspaper clippings and segments of video alongside hundreds of handwritten dates, years and short descriptions of significant events related to the choir's history as well as to that of the country at large. As the timeline circles the room multiple times, events, images and dates that, in linear time, are very far apart, become enmeshed with each other in the same collage, linked by their overlapped positioning.

One small section of the wall, for example, lists the dates 1932, 1936 and 2004 in close proximity to each other (see Figure 4). Surrounding these dates are several handwritten notes, inscribed directly onto the concrete wall, which document, among other events, the Land Act of 1936, the birth of South African singer Miriam Makeba, a drought, and the Polokwane choir's tour to Canada. Interspersed around these writings are other unlabelled photographs, some in colour, others in black and white. One shows a family of seven (it is unclear whose). Another two images depict an unnamed outdoor public event and a man addressing an audience from a podium. Very little is explained. Bopape provides fragments of information, placed in and around these images but, ultimately, the onlooker must make sense of these and imagine connections between them.

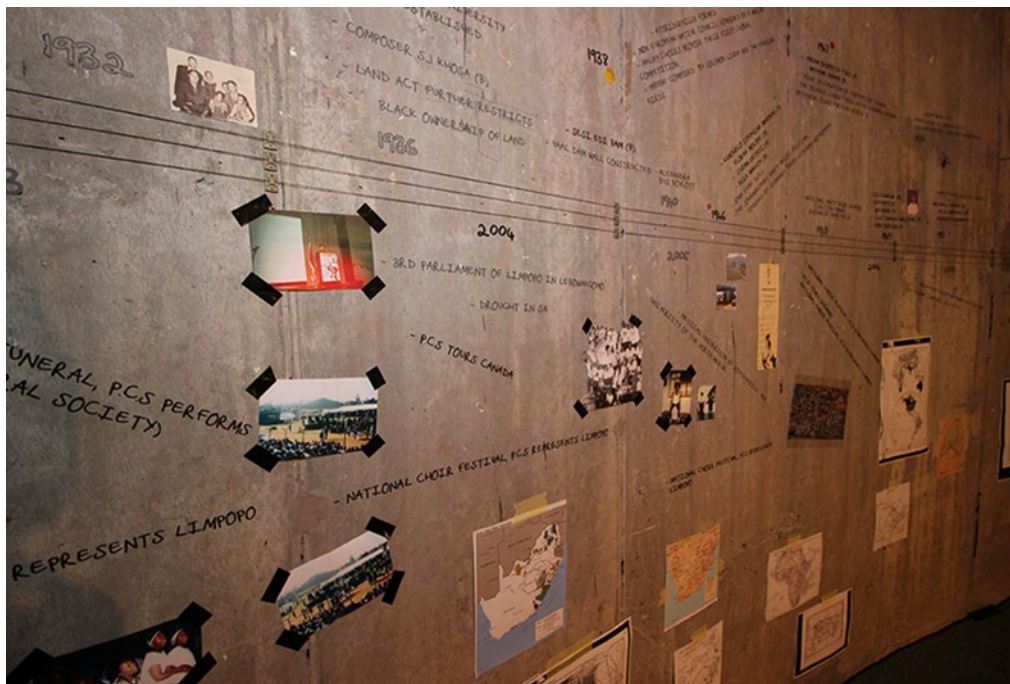


Figure 4: Section of Dineo Seshee Bopape's *Sa koša ke lerole*. Photographer: Dineo Seshee Bopape

Bopape also creates small loops and folds in time through the projection of digital images and light boxes where the creation of the image (visually), which occurs in the present moment, is juxtaposed with material objects whose origins are in the distant past. For instance, an overhead projector projects a light-image over a collection of existing images attached to the wall. These interact with each other even though one is being produced in the present while the others are connected to a past. Additionally, digital projectors (often arranged on music stands) and light-boxes project live images, in and amongst the other archival objects. The room is dimly lit and, as such, the spectator is often required to actively *look closer* at the various objects in order to see them. Beyond just looking, Bopape's world of objects also invites the spectator to move *within* it: to crouch down, lean in, hover over, get closer and navigate their way around certain objects in order to glimpse others.

In describing another of Bopape's installation works, entitled *The eclipse will not be visible to the naked eye* (2010), Rael Jero Salley observes, "the overall effect is perplexing, awkward and incoherent. Once more, the viewer is left with the sense that a story has just begun, is about to begin, or has just been missed" (2013:359). In response to the same work, Christopher Williams-Wynn and Samantha McCulloch (2015:429) remark:

Her assortment of materials is left scattered throughout the installation, reflecting an inability to set objects in determinate and prescribed relationships. Bopape refuses to categorise her collections, thereby challenging archival impulses towards order and hierarchy. (2015:429)

In both of these descriptions the authors articulate a sense of confusion and disorientation upon entering one of Bopape's installations, initiated through the seemingly chaotic arrangement of the objects coupled with an inability to clearly locate the installation in time.

In *Sa koša ke lerole* time similarly seems to work differently: visually (through the spiralling, overlapping, looping and folding timeline); experientially (through not being able to adequately identify where the installation's journey begins or ends); and contextually (through the confusion arising from the expectation of a live performance coupled with an inability to ascertain whether it has already happened, is about to begin, or is already in progress). Zoé Whitley suggests of Bopape's engagement with time in her work:

The artist conceives of time and space through acts of simultaneity and synchronicity, collapsing the past and future into the present. [...] Bopape negotiates, ruptures and creates spaces beyond the visual through her explorations of realms aural, digital, political, social, imagined and remembered. (2014:179)

As Whitley alludes to here, Bopape's archives can be seen as resistant spaces. They resist hierarchy and order, linearity and chronology, historicity and narrative, beginnings and endings and, most importantly, distinctions between subjects and objects. Bopape acknowledges this resistance within her artistic practice, which she describes as being located in a desire "to displace history, memory, a fantasy, the story" (in Van der Merwe, 2016:12).

By creating an archival space premised on the nonsubject, as those who are neither subject nor object but also both, Bopape, I would suggest, manifests an immersive atmosphere of blackness that Moten has famously equated with "nothingness" (Moten, 2013). The nothingness of blackness, Moten argues, is not conceived as a negative ontology associated with the lack or absence of value or existence, but rather "a radically different form, desiring always something that is not there but, at the same time, is reachable and possible" (Sosnowska, 2017:51). Sosnowska explains:

Nothingness is for Moten a door to utopia, to a new universal church of blackness. In this church, [...] there is no subject-object difference as those categories become fluid. The only materiality then is the materiality of nothingness, which is indeed the materiality of

ruins and leftovers. In dancing with them, establishing them as works of art and 'black space', [one] creates and performs blackness as nothingness. (2017:51)

Sosnowska (2017:51) acknowledges that, for Moten, blackness as nothingness thus becomes "a field of philosophical discourse with universalistic ambitions" where the resistance of blackness, through its un-subjective status, becomes a space to reconsider knowledge and existence outside of known and familiar epistemological systems and to (re)imagine a future and a past that are not there, but remain palpable and reachable. Archival objects, leftovers, ruins and remains become in this instance, as Sosnowska suggests, particularly anarchival, where "leftovers are not things. They are a material dimension of time inviting people to perform their identity outside of its linear and unidirectional dimension" (2017:55). This, I suggest, is precisely what Bopape's *Sa koša ke lerole* urges its participants to do.

Between affect and nothingness

Where Cohen uses the abjection of his performance world to destabilise and fragment the subject status of his audience, Bopape's disruption of audience subjectivity occurs through their enrolment in the work as participants and performers. As already alluded to above, Bopape's complex arrangement of the various objects, in terms of display, necessitates an active and embodied looking on the part of the spectator. The spectator must decide where to begin, decide which pathways, loops and folds to follow and, ultimately, must insert themselves physically within the installation. There is thus a shifting of the conventional dynamic associated with the politics of display, where an object is exhibited in service to the gaze of the beholder. In this context, the beholder must actively seek out the object, often navigating proximities of closeness and distance. In order to see the objects properly and entirely the spectator cannot stand in the centre of the spiral and gaze outwards. The spectator must enter into the spiralling vortex and become a participant by relegating their subjectivity in servitude to the objects.

In their paper, *Beyond nostalgia: the role of affect in generating historical understanding at heritage sites* (2007), Kate Gregory and Andrea Witcomb consider the role that affect plays in museum exhibitions where, unlike art exhibitions, education and the passing on of knowledge and information are dominant intentions. They suggest:

Traditional ways of producing and disseminating knowledge are no longer sufficient to equip contemporary citizens. Rather than analytical didactic approaches to representation [...] it is embodied forms of knowledge apprehended by the senses rather than through analytical processes that we need to understand. (Gregory & Witcomb, 2007:263)

Toward this end, they argue for the necessity of a reconceptualised approach to the display of museum objects in a way that might enable affect to emerge so that other ways of knowing and thinking can be engaged. In achieving this Gregory and Witcomb suggest a shift in emphasis away from “the trope of nostalgia” in the form of “ready-made narrative” and “contextual information through traditional social history” in favour of “invitations to inhabit a space” (2007:269). In inhabiting an exhibition as an active participant a “more inquisitive approach” (2007:269) is thus encouraged, where visitors have agency to discover more personal connections, associations and narratives. Similarly, the lessening of contextual information and historical facts within the exhibition contributes to the creation of gaps and silences within the narrative that the visitor is able to imagine into.

By conceiving of the museum or heritage site as a *space* that can be inhabited (and is thus active, dynamic and temporal) rather than a *picture* (of a past moment frozen in time) to be looked at, they argue, historical exhibitions are able to become,

potential gateways to other possible worlds, that is, they offer moments of dialectical possibility [...] because the narratives produced through affect are the result of the tensions and interplays between form and content or space and objects and the viewer. (2007:265)

These tensions and interplays, through which affect emerges, result from a temporal confrontation that occurs when historical objects and their traces are engaged with through the awareness and knowing of the present. Citing Walter Benjamin’s (2002/1982) concept of the dialectical image, Gregory and Witcomb suggest that in these confrontations between the past and the present “a new awareness of the past is produced in the clash between received ideas about the past and the sense of radical difference from the present moment” (2007:269). For Benjamin it is precisely this clash – a flash of a moment of recognition experienced affectively as a state of shock or surprise – where critique and new thinking of the past, present and future occurs (2002/1982:473).

Although related to museums and heritage sites, Gregory and Witcomb’s observations are useful in identifying the ways in which *Sa koša ke lerole* can be seen to elicit affect as a

means to think and know differently. Bopape herself describes the installation as a “travelling museum” (National Arts Festival, 2017:95) and, in many ways, the installation is also a heritage site, or rather, a site of heritage. The Polokwane Chorale Society and its history are positioned in the work as a heritage, of Bopape personally but also, beyond this, of the country and of blackness. A small moment in time (in comparison to the inconceivable vastness of all time) and a nostalgic childhood memory of “a community held in the music” (Bopape in National Arts Festival, 2017:95) thus becomes, through Bopape’s complex layering of objects, sounds, images, sensations and feelings, an entire world that is both inside and outside of time and a product of both imagination and historical precedent.

Sa koša ke lerole takes a nostalgic moment from Bopape’s past and enmeshes it with other micro and macro social, political, and cultural moments and histories associated with South Africa through an assemblage of diverse, often contradictory objects, forces and sensations. The fragmented and destabilised body of the installation is, however, simultaneously held in an overriding atmosphere of positive representations, community and music. In crouching down, looking closely, and moving in between the various objects, the spectators become immersed, sensorially, corporeally and affectively in Bopape’s ludic moment, where they are asked to make sense of their encounter with this archive of blackness by entering into composition with it. These archival objects, like the history of blackness Moten describes, exert a palpable “dispossessive force” through which the engaging subject becomes “possessed – infused, deformed – by the object” (Moten, 2003:1). Bopape’s objects thus draw the audience into a world where “blackness and imagination are more-or-less one” (Moten, 2013:752), but where entry into this world requires an active, curious engagement by the subject and a willingness to know the world of the object. The nothingness of Bopape’s manifestation of blackness, and of black identities and black histories, is thus not nothing, but rather a slippage from oppressive systems and discourses through “affirming and celebrating its own condition” (Sosnowska, 2017:51), its own nothingness.

Together, the analyses of these works by Cohen and Bopape reveal both the complexities and the potential values that emerge from the anarchival exploration of archival objects, as surfaced in the research-creation process of *Detritus for one*. In conjunction, these three instances of anarchiving through performance provide valuable insight into the specific ways in which objects, as the holders of traces (of histories, memories and knowledge), might

become springboards and lines of flight to other ways of knowing, of knowing differently and, indeed, towards alternative ways of thinking (generally) and thinking about the past in relation to the present and the future.

Similarly, the invaluable role played by affect in anarchival questioning has been explicated as a means to destabilise understandings of the body, of identity and, more broadly, of human being firmly rooted in Platonic and Cartesian understandings of reality. While archival in their nature and their ability to remain, objects also hold possibilities within anarchival research as potential gateways to the discovery and reimagining of ulterior futures beyond subject-object distinctions and those oppressive systems and structures from which the object-centred archive is born.

Chapter consolidation

In Part 1 of this chapter I offered a theorising of performance detritus as being holders of archival traces – both in terms of memory, as reminders of the experience of past performances, but also as virtualities of those embodied actions and activities enacted within a past performative encounter. I suggested that these traces are transformative; that our engagement with archival objects creates a context and a situation where these virtual traces can manifest as different, alternate iterations. In this way, objects are not only spurs to the remembering of an event, but also active participants in transforming these virtual traces into new, reimagined forms. Within this capacity, I have also suggested that fake archival objects similarly exhibit a unique ability to augment reimagining, where the specific materiality and thingness of (fake) objects, further contribute to and complicate the reimagining of traces.

I then delineated a series of micropractices where the virtual traces of the object were seen to initiate lines of flight to other manifestations, moving images and assemblages in the creation of *Detritus for one*. Through the reflective thinking-through of these processes, the necessity of destabilising the relationship between the subject and the object was acknowledged as a means to desubjectivise the subject in order for the object (as thing) to initiate and guide alternative thinking. The nature of this thinking was then explicated through consideration of affect and the ways in which affective thinking represents both a disrupting

of dominant representational paradigms as well as a concurrent re-balancing of the rift between cognitive and embodied epistemologies and between archive and the body.

Part 2 of this chapter provided further clarification on affect, its distinction from emotion and its conception as a kind of thinking that is beyond ideology and thus indicative of a break from the symbolic order of subject and object. Works by Cohen and Bopape were offered as examples in which an anarchival encounter with archival objects can be seen to break hierarchical subject-object relations and to create spatio-temporal worlds where affect is privileged as a way of thinking. The analyses of these works demonstrated that while Cohen approaches affect through an encounter with the abject, Bopape's installation of the archivally absent, nonsubject black body (and its histories) presents an alternative archival space where affect and sensation are privileged over the traditionally archival sharing of historical fact and documentation.

Together, both layers of this chapter reveal and demonstrate practical methodologies for the re-actualising of archival traces through an anarchival engagement with its objects. The reflection on creative process and the analysis of performance works detail how knowledge and dominant epistemologies within the archive become disrupted through the reimagining of the past beyond subject/object divides and through the reinserting of the body and its thinking into the archive. In the following chapter, the body-as-archive is considered as another potential locale for anarchival research, where the virtual traces of past actions, gestures and intensities, within the body, become initiators for difference and change.

CHAPTER FOUR: BODIES

Introduction

In as much as an object can be seen to hold virtual traces of the past, and thus potential for anarchival investigation, what *Detritus for one* makes apparent is the crucial role played by the body in this process through its own ability to both store and actualise traces of the past. As an archive, the body is thus another potential springboard for anarchival processes of creation and questioning. This chapter considers the choreographic problem of how virtual traces might be re-actualised through the body from the perspective of the body-as-archive, where, after Lepecki (2010), these virtual traces are understood as the lingering intensities, within the body, of past gestures and actions and of other past bodies who have previously enacted these gestures.

In Part 1, the body's ability to absorb, store and re-enact past bodies and actions is explored through a thinking-through of the research process of creating *Sacre for one*. These micropractices are situated in relation to the history and genealogy of the canonical modernist ballet *Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring)*, originally created in 1913 by Igor Stravinsky, Vaslav Nijinsky and Nicholas Roerich, and whose music (by Stravinsky), libretto (Roerich) and/or choreography (Nijinsky) have inspired hundreds of theatrical re-imaginings and re-interpretations in a multiplicity of styles and forms. In this way, this *archive* of past dances and past bodies becomes the source for anarchival micropractices which explore the body's capacity to absorb traces of these past dances and to actualise them, differently, in the present.

In Part 2 this re-actualising of embodied traces is further considered through Manning's understanding of touch and the minor gesture, where the intermingling of embodied traces, from the past and present, is framed as an epistemological act of reaching-toward past bodies as a means to *know*, differently. This act of atemporal reaching is extrapolated in Part 2 through an analysis of Nelisiwe Xaba's *The Venus*.

PART 1: THE BODY AS ANARCHIVAL SOURCE

In *Detritus for one* the body is positioned as an archive predominantly through its ability to remember and store the affective intensities of past encounters with live performance. In this approach, memory is understood in phenomenological terms where, rather than locating memory on the side of Mind in a Cartesian Mind/Body split, an interdependency is recognised amongst the mind, body and memory and between processes of knowing and sensing, where a bodily being in the world is understood as a way of knowing and where perception, through the body's senses, always involves "some work of our memory, and consequently, of our consciousness" (Bergson, 1991/1896:70). Massumi distinguishes the kind of memory involved in perception as different to "conscious memory" (Massumi, 2015:61). He calls this memory (after Whitehead) the "immediate past" which he describes as "enacted past, actively present" (2015:59). Unlike conscious memory, which is retrospective and intentional and moves "from the present to reactivate the past" (2015:61), the immediate past is an unconscious remembering constituted by bodily microperceptions which instantaneously inform perceptions in the present with felt encounters from the past "before any possibility of reflection" (2015:59).⁴⁵

Frederik Le Roy (2017:131) notes a similar distinction of memory in Walter Benjamin's works on the philosophy of history, and specifically in his posthumously published, *The Arcades project* (2002/1982). As Le Roy explains, the first kind of remembering, *Gedächtnis*, is for Benjamin "an intentional act of retrieving memories" that is "premised on a conception of the past as a coherent, chronologically structured repository of events, accessible to us at all times through processes of conscious remembering" (2017:131). Conversely, the second kind of memory, *Eingedenken*, is understood as a "sudden, forceful resurgence of the past in the present" and thus "a moment of disruption of the continuum of history" (2017:131).⁴⁶ Through the nineteenth-century figure of the 'Flâneur' Benjamin further explains how these

⁴⁵ Massumi also articulates a third kind of memory, which concerns a process of "remembering forwards" and which he calls "Kierkegaardian memory" (Massumi, 2015:62).

⁴⁶ This kind of remembering is closely associated with the dialectical image (noted in the previous chapter) and constitutes the shock or jolt of the past into the present, resulting from an encounter with the dialectical image, through memory.

two kinds of memory come to be in the body. For Benjamin, the flâneur, as an on-foot wanderer of the city, is akin to a battery that is constantly absorbing sensations, energies and felt experiences, becoming a “walking body storing time” (Le Roy, 2017:128). As the flâneur traverses space, his sensory experience of the journey is subsumed into his body, as a “passive consumer of historical images” (2017:129).⁴⁷ The journey of the flâneur, Benjamin argues, is therefore always one of repetition and re-remembrance – what Benjamin calls “anamnetic intoxication” (in Le Roy, 2017:129) – where time (as experience) stored in the body synchronises, overlaps with and informs the body’s perception of an environment or image in the present. While these particular categorisations of memory by Massumi and Benjamin are not synonymous and differ both in how they conceptualise memory as well as in the specific contexts in which memory is theorised, they both make clear the capacity for memory to be conscious and intentional as well as involuntary, instinctual and felt. Similarly, both philosophers acknowledge the inherent bridging of time that is conjured in the act of remembering, and specifically, the overlapping of past and present occurring when memory is unconsciously, and suddenly, engaged through, and with, the body.

From another perspective, Bojana Bauer similarly acknowledges two kinds of memory implicated in the specific context of formal dance training, namely muscle memory (the mechanical, physiological storing of past actions) and emotional memory (the felt, experiential and sensorial storing of past embodied encounters). At the beginning of her paper, *When train(ing) derails* (2009), Bauer cites a warning by American choreographer Steve Paxton to future dancers. Paxton states: “[Be] careful with what you put inside your body, because what you put there once will never leave it” (in Bauer, 2009:74). Similarly, in her paper, *Between bodies and the archive: situating the ‘act’* (2013), Laura Griffiths quotes veteran British performer Wendy Houstoun who, speaking about her ageing body, observes: “[It] has imprints of moves running around it that reside in another era. They exist in a place of fast neurological connections and an unquestioned need to move. But they encounter a piece of machinery that is slowing” (in Griffiths, 2013:192). Both Paxton’s warning and Houstoun’s description of her own experienced body emphasise the body’s capacity to retain traces of corporeal vocabularies, techniques and physicalities (as a muscle-mechanical memory) as well as the

⁴⁷ I use the masculine pronoun because this is the pronoun used by Benjamin (who conceives of the flâneur as male) but acknowledge, in this instance, that the gender of the flâneur is irrelevant.

effects, sensations and underlying ideologies of those moving experiences (as an emotional-experiential memory). Additionally, both Paxton and Houston allude to the enduring nature of these traces, suggesting that once a trace or imprint has been absorbed into the body, it remains there permanently with the potential to inform any future re-rememberings as a “living memory active in the creation of the present” (Bauer, 2009:76).

Houston and Paxton’s understanding of dancing thus highlights the archival nature of the body not only in relation to its capacity to store time and experience (as noted by Bergson, Benjamin and Massumi) but more specifically in its enduring corporeal embodiment *and* re-enactment of remembered gestures, behaviours, physicalities and actions, as well as their associated underlying ideologies, from a past moment. This capacity of the dancing body-as-archive to both absorb and store past actions and behaviours, which it is then able to (re)-enact, is also the basis for Taylor’s recognition of the performatic within the repertoire, as discussed in Chapter One. This same archival capacity of the dancing body has also been recognised by dance scholars such as Ramsay Burt and Mark Franko as indicative of Foucault’s poststructuralist understanding of the body’s ‘destruction by history’ through discipline and inscription (Burt, 2004; Franko, 2011a) and, by extension, of Butler’s understanding of performativity (Burt, 2004), where the body’s complicit (as Butler contends) ability to store and replicate past behaviours becomes a method for its control by socio-cultural forces of power. Taking into account the body’s multiple capacities for the storing and replication of memory and behaviour it seems justified, then, to concur with Lepecki when he suggests: “A body may have always already been nothing other than an archive” (2010:34).

Toward micropractice: the body in/as the archive

This understanding of the body-as-archive underpins the second choreographic strategy for anarchival investigation explored within this project. The taking-form of this process occurred through the performance of the solo work *Sacre for one*, which was created over a period of three months in early 2016 and performed on five occasions at the National Arts Festival in Makhanda in July 2016, and again in Cape Town at the Cape Town Fringe Festival in September 2016. Like *Detritus for one*, the solo manifestation of this work developed from earlier creative explorations which involved other bodies, and thus emerges in solo form as a distilling of ideas and impulses explored over a period of time predating formal doctoral study. Two previous

investigations, occurring between 2012 and 2014, led directly to the development of *Sacre for one*, and are framed here as separate micropractices which combine and converse with each other in the most recent form of the work.

The creation processes of *Sacre for one* and its earlier manifestations were rooted in a particular interest in testing and exploring the limits of the body-as-archive. Whereas an intrigue with archival detritus had sparked my initial research into the archive, a curiosity about the body and its ability to hold traces of past dances, re-emerged from the process of creating *Detritus for one*. *Detritus for one* placed a significant emphasis on my body's memories of encounters with past performances rooted in a particular understanding of liveness and embodied immediacy. This liveness was largely conceived through Peggy Phelan's (1993) ontological understanding of performance as closely tied to disappearance, where the memory of the event and its subsequent relocation into the body of the witness, becomes the only way in which performance is able to remain. By collecting, assembling, and performing these combined embodied encounters, based in my body's memory, *Detritus for one* also becomes (somewhat unintentionally) a kind of personal genealogy, or what Jonathan Arac calls a "critical genealogy" (1987).

As Arac explains, a critical genealogy "aims to excavate the past that is necessary to account for how we got here and the past that is useful to conceiving alternatives to our present condition" (1987:2). Like a Foucauldian genealogy, this is a method of analysis that "is not a tracing of lineages ... [and] does not seek origins, does not look for cause and effect, and does not construct a linear development of an issue or concept" (Ritenburg, 2010:72) but rather one that "operates from the premise that our ways of being are historically contingent" (Anais, 2013:134). From this genealogical perspective, *Detritus for one* presents, on a personal level, a form of potential self-analysis where several significant moments from my past are placed alongside each other, rendered open for comparison and critique, to ask critical questions such as: How did I get here? How have I come to be? What influences, attitudes, prejudices, and characteristics from these encounters have moulded me and the way in which I make (and think about) performance?⁴⁸

⁴⁸ I am indebted here to statements articulated by Guelke & Timothy in *Geography and genealogy: locating personal pasts* (2008:15), which I have drawn from, loosely rephrased and rearticulated as questions.

Despite the genealogical value of this process, in retrospect, what I was made most aware of by this perspective, was the notable limitation imposed (genealogically speaking) by the process's exclusive focus on a particular kind of embodied encounter located in a particular understanding of liveness. Critically, I was cognisant that in terms of my own genealogy as a choreographer and performer, there were many other significant encounters with performance, subsumed into my body-as-archive, that I had not encountered live, or rather, that I had encountered through a different kind of liveness. In creating *Sacre for one* I was therefore particularly interested in exploring the body's archival capacity to assume the traces of past behaviours and actions as encountered through other kinds of liveness, or more specifically, through encounters with performance's mediated documentation.

'Pushing the archive into the body' – or, I'd rather be a Ragpicker

This rethinking of performance's liveness was largely influenced by Auslander (1999 & 2006) and Schneider (2001 & 2011), whose individual responses to Phelan's (1993) equating of performance with disappearance, both suggest that although live performance does ontologically disappear due to its nature as an event in time and space, it can also remain (albeit differently) through its documentation. Auslander (1999) argues that an understanding of the live as being in opposition to the mediated represents a flawed and false assumption about their relationship which, he suggests, is relational rather than oppositional. In this understanding, an embodied experience of liveness is possible when watching a digital recording of a performance that is acknowledged as different from the experience of encountering the work unmediated, but still experiential and thus ultimately live. In this sense, although I have never seen a work by Pina Bausch performed live, I have experienced, felt, sensed and been moved by many encounters with her works through digital recordings.

It is useful here to return to Benjamin as a means to further clarify this archival difference for the body. In some ways, Benjamin's conception of the flâneur can be compared to the audience member who encounters a live performance. The body experiences the encounter in time and space and stores within it the memory of what happened, and of the sensations and images felt. Each encounter with a performance also then becomes a re-remembering, where the perception of the live encounter in the here-and-now is also infused with the memories of past experiences and past performed actions. Le Roy (2017:129)

describes the flâneur's consumption of time in this activity as "passive" in the sense that all the body needs to do to store the experience is to 'be in the world' – to experience the encounter.⁴⁹

In contrast to the flâneur, Benjamin conceives of the 'Ragpicker' as an altogether different encounter with, and experience of, time and memory. Unlike the flâneur, who wanders as a means to experience, the ragpicker, whose function it is to collect waste and debris, actively *seeks out* and *collects* that which is discarded (Le Roy, 2017:129). As Le Roy notes, the ragpicker, for Benjamin, is also a *Lumpensammler* or puzzler who will then "combine debris to discover if seemingly disparate fragments, once they are put next to each other, may suddenly start to communicate in unexpected ways" (2017:131). The ragpicker is thus a markedly different kind of archivist – one with a (notably anarchival) "capacity to unlock the revolutionary potential stored in forgotten or wasted historical events" (2017:130). Recognising that performance documentation constitutes a form of archival detritus, the body that actively seeks out an encounter with this debris becomes a kind of ragpicker, pursuing, collecting, and puzzling together encounters with past bodies and past behaviours, sourced through their leftover remains.

The distinction I wish to emphasise here, in terms of embodied methodologies of archiving, is thus largely one of intention. Whereas the encounters with time and memory engaged with in the process of *Detritus for one* emerged from the body-as-archive, these live experiences were subsumed into the body in a manner more akin to that of the flâneur – that is, I did not actively experience each performance with the intention of archiving the encounter into my body. In *Sacre for one*, however, the approach and intention were more closely aligned with the work of the ragpicker, where I actively sought out performance documentation with the intention to archive fragments of these encounters within my body and its memories.

Lepecki (2010) has observed a similar intentionality in the work of artists such as drag performer and Martha Graham impersonator, Richard Move, and performance artist, Julie

⁴⁹ Le Roy refers here to a passivity in terms of intention – the audience member/flâneur does not have to actively remember or store the experience in order for the event to enter the body. This is not, therefore, a passive spectatorship but a passive archiving. The audience member is still active as a spectator, as Ranci re (2009) has suggested, due to the significant role played by the body's capacity to retain past images and sensations which actively inform spectating processes of perception and interpretation.

Tolentino, who both actively seek out opportunities in their work to absorb into their bodies the archives of other performers.⁵⁰ He describes this archival strategy as “pushing the archive into the body” (2010:37) and suggests that, through this “mutual metamorphosis” (2010:37) any division between body and archive becomes invisible, creating,

[...] a particular economy, where bodies intertwine, or intermingle, across time – in an endless chain of reciprocal emissions, transmissions, receptions, and exchanges of times, gestures, steps, affects, sweat, breathing, and historical and political particles. (Lepecki, 2010:39)

Lepecki likens the “pushing of the archive into the body” as a means for the body to enter into the archive, which he recognises (after Foucault) not only as a place, but also as a system. As a system, Lepecki suggests, the archive must also enter into the body so that they are one-and-the-same and are able to metamorphose.

The intention in creating *Sacre for one* was thus to explore this “mutual metamorphosis” of body-as-archive through an active and intentional augmenting of what is archived in the body as a means to then ask: what happens when these various fragments, traces, memories and actions combine in one body and in one performative event?

Thinking-through micropractice: reflecting on *Sacre for one*

As noted above, *Sacre for one* emerges from, and in performance, converses with, two prior creative engagements with the mythology and music of *The Rite of Spring*. Each process is considered below as a separate micropractice because although each investigation engages with notions of body-as-archive and with histories related to the ballet (in its various forms), each iteration emerges from and explores distinct questions and choreographic problems, which culminate and combine in the solo performance. Before explicating the three processes individually it is necessary to first ask the question: *Why The Rite of Spring?*

⁵⁰ In his re-enactments Move relies largely on documentation of Graham’s work. In Tolentino’s durational project *The sky remains the same* (2008 and ongoing), she offers to house in her body selected works by other artists until her death. In this process Tolentino observes these performances live, but with the *intention* to re-enact. See Lepecki (2010:30-44) for more detailed descriptions of these processes.

A multiplicity of 'Rites'

My first encounter with *The Rite*⁵¹ occurred in 2003 during a university lecture on German *Tanzteater* where we were shown a short section of footage from Pina Bausch's 1975 version, *Das Frühlingsopfer*. At the time of this first encounter I was unaware that there were other, earlier versions of *The Rite* and that a connection existed between Bausch's (re)imagining of the work and a multiplicity of other versions occurring both prior to, and long after, her own. It was only during my postgraduate studies in 2005, while writing a paper on Millicent Hodson's 1987 reconstruction of Nijinsky's ballet, that I became aware of the (then) ninety-two year-long legacy of the work.

Since then I have held a particular fascination with the mythology of *The Rite* and its many diverse, often political, often controversially experimental manifestations. Personal fascinations with the work notwithstanding, the rich histories and legacies of *The Rite* that compose (and comprise) its mythology present an ideal, and compelling, instance of the body-as-archive at work. In many ways, *The Rite* is the ultimate body-as-archive. If we consider the body in Deleuzian terms not as a corporeal and material physiology but as "an assemblage of forces or affects that enter into composition with a multiplicity of other forces or affects" (Del Rio, 2008:3), then *The Rite* and its many actualisations over time, encompassing it like a "cloud of virtual images" (Burt, 2009:448), becomes, I suggest, a kind of body, or more specifically, a kind of body archive – what one might venture to describe as a body-as-archive-without-organs.⁵²

What makes *The Rite*, understood as a body, particularly compelling as an archive of diverse bodily traces is the sheer magnitude of its proliferation. Unlike other dances considered to be canonical, and which have been reinterpreted and reimagined in various ways and in various times and spaces (such as *Swan Lake* and *Giselle*),⁵³ *The Rite*, I would

⁵¹ I use 'The Rite' as a shortened version of the full title (in its English translation) throughout the following discussion.

⁵² The body without organs is a concept originally introduced by Artaud but theorised by Deleuze and Guattari as an understanding of the body conceived not as an organism or a machine of interconnected organs and parts, but an assemblage of forces, energies and affects, outside of signification and representation. See Deleuze & Guattari (1977/1972:9-15) and (1987/1980:149-166).

⁵³ Both of these iconic classical ballets have been drastically reimagined, deconstructed and reinterpreted by choreographers such as Matthew Bourne, Mats Ek, Dada Masilo and Akram Khan among many others. See Middelw (2007).

argue, is somewhat unique in that, despite its canonical status and continuous recreation in differing space-time locales, its mythology as a 'lost ballet' and thus its unstable connection to any perceived original performative form as a fixed centre, establishes a particularly open field for the exploration of difference.⁵⁴ While ballets like *Swan Lake* or *Giselle* have also been significantly re-interpreted in terms of their music and/or libretto, these alternative manifestations are more likely to be understood through their difference to, or departure from, their original classical form, because these dances continue to be widely performed in their classical forms, hundreds of years after their creation. Some historical details of Nijinsky's original ballet are documented and thus known,⁵⁵ and Hodson's reconstruction of his choreography, seventy-four years after the original, provides an approximate sense of what the original ballet might have looked like.⁵⁶ However, the vast majority of *The Rite's* subsequent recreations were not fundamentally concerned with the preservation of an originating form but rather with a constant, and continual, re-imagining of Stravinsky's score and/or the libretto and themes of the ballet.⁵⁷

The result of this destabilising of *The Rite* from its original performance form is its subsequent openness to processes of re-imagination, re-contextualisation and, as Theodore Bale observes, "cross-fertilization between ballet and contemporary movement strategies" (2008:330). Bale suggests that, "*Rite* demonstrates nearly every notable aesthetic direction asserted in concert dance (including, but not limited to, ballet) during the last century" (2008:329). He describes *The Rite*, somewhat verbosely, as "the quintessential 'global' ballet" (2008:327), a title he strives to justify by charting a plethora of manifestations, emerging from Europe, North and South American, Australia and Africa. Among the many different, but often recurring, thematic shifts and aesthetic tendencies associated with *The Rite* and its century-long history, Bale acknowledges instances where the work has been,

⁵⁴ The ballet is considered 'lost' because following its 1913 season it was struck from the repertoire of the *Ballets Russes* and was not performed in this form again. It reappeared in their repertoire in 1920 but with new choreography by then-resident choreographer Leonide Massine (Hodson, 1996:vii).

⁵⁵ For instance, that it was first performed, only five times, in Paris at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, in May of 1913, to a controversial and riotous reception. It was performed a further three times in London that same year (Hodson, 1996:vii)

⁵⁶ Hodson's reconstruction was based predominantly on old photographs, sketches, written accounts, some remaining bits of notation by Nijinsky and Marie Rambert (who assisted Nijinsky as musicologist) and the memories of some very old dancers. See Hodson (1996).

⁵⁷ Bale (2008:341) notes, for example, that by the time Hodson had completed her reconstruction of the original ballet, in excess of one hundred other versions of the work had already been created around the world.

[...] significantly abstracted ... given new narratives ... revitalized with trends in feminist theory ... eroticized ... danced by an all-male and all-female cast ... transferred from pagan Russia to other distant tribes ... restated within a particular style or vernacular form ... realized within the realm of butoh ... deeply politicized with respect to queer and transsexual identities ... and drastically deconstructed, appearing in such fragmentation that its connection to the premiere is nearly indiscernible. (Bale, 2008:329-330, reduction and ellipsis mine)

As this list demonstrates, the 'cloud of virtual traces' that surrounds *The Rite* stretches far beyond twentieth-century Paris and early modernist thinking and connects, instead, to an extensive multiplicity of other *Rites* and thus, other times, spaces, bodies, dances, ideas, thoughts, feelings and socio-cultural, geopolitical contexts. From this perspective, to engage choreographically, and anarchivally, with *The Rite* through the body-as-archive, becomes a process that extends beyond the re-enacting of past gestures, behaviours and bodies and asks ontological and epistemological questions about dance, the body and about the genealogical connection between the past, present and future.

Micropractice one: The remembered rite

The first engagement with these notions and with *The Rite* itself occurred through the process of creating what came to be known (unofficially) as *The remembered rite* in 2012. The dance, which was performed by three bodies, formed a part of a much larger immersive theatre project I was working on in collaboration with performance artist Gavin Krastin and digital artist Rat Western. The project, entitled *Discharge*, was performed over five consecutive evenings in July 2012. Installed in a large aeroplane hangar at the First City Regiment military base in Makhanda, the work was conceptualised in response to the prevalence of apocalyptic doomsday narratives surrounding the year of 2012. The world created inside the hangar was imaginatively post-apocalyptic, and included strangely costumed figures, existing in equally strange ways, in a haven constructed from foraged objects and materials collected by those who survived. *The remembered rite* occurred somewhere in the middle of this vast, cavernous space, performed inside a circle constructed from mounds of shredded paper, around which audience members gathered.

The departure point in creating *The remembered rite* was to imagine what a post-apocalyptic *Rite of Spring* might look like, or more specifically, to consider what dances might remain, preserved through the bodies of those who survived, after the world's civilisations

and their archival institutions had ceased to exist, and which might then become the raw materials from which to re-constitute a *Rite of Spring*. Only the final two sections of Stravinsky's score were used in this version, namely *Ritual action of the ancestors* and *Sacrificial dance*.

The process of creating the work was collaborative in nature but was guided by myself as choreographer (and performer) with contributions from the two other performers, Siyabulela Mbambaza and Nomcebisi Moyikwa. The source vocabulary was drawn, predominantly, from existing dances contained in the bodies of the three performers, with a focus on popular social dances as vocabularies that are, generally speaking, familiar or widely known by many people and thus more likely to survive an apocalypse. The popular dances we identified included The Macarena, The Time Warp, The YMCA, the Electric Slide, the *pata-pata* dance,⁵⁸ and certain hip-hop motifs. In addition to these dances, I also invited a colleague, Robert Haxton, into several early rehearsals. Haxton had previously taught himself the choreography to several of Britney Spears' music videos, and during these sessions he shared fragments of some of these music video dances with us, adding to those existing vocabularies already identified in our bodies.

In this way, the choreography for *The remembered rite* was largely readymade and as such, the choreographic process was concerned more with unearthing connections and conversations between Stravinsky's score and the popular dance language. The movement material and the score thus constituted the territory from which to depart in this exploratory micropractice, which was approached predominantly through instinct, play, and trial-and-error processes rather than through a pre-planned, meticulously structured or musicological approach to establishing this connection. During rehearsals the three performers would improvise and experiment with the various vocabularies in relation to different parts of the score, and would experiment with the phrasing, duration, speed, effort and spatial qualities of the source movements.

Through this process the distinct dances comprising the source vocabulary became fragmented and composite in their reconstruction in relation to the score. By this I mean that

⁵⁸ This is a gestural dance of patting the body with the hands, related to Miriam Makeba's Afro-pop song, *Pata Pata* (1967).

parts of each dance, or parts of individual movement motifs, were ultimately rearranged according to where an interesting connection occurred between groupings of movements or gestures from different dances in relation to the shifting tones and patterns of Stravinsky's complex score. In this way, while it was still possible to visually recognise parts of the Macarena or the Time Warp, these motifs continually combined, repeated and overlapped in patterns and constructions that were not bound by narrative nor intentional meaning-making. The dance's structure, rather, was the result of a ragpicker-like puzzling-together of these different fragments in a process guided by feeling and an awareness of their relationship to the unchangeability of the pre-recorded score.

What became clear toward the end of this process was the need for the physicality and embodiment of these actions to match the turbulent energies and forces unleashed through Stravinsky's score. Burt describes Stravinsky's score for *The Rite of Spring* as having "inexorable drive" and a "dynamic intensification of affect" (2009:450). The music, particularly in the *Sacrificial Dance*, is explosive in its virtual power, where the pounding forces and energies beneath the actual instrumental sounds become viscerally palpable through their combination with each other. This necessitated a corresponding "dynamic intensification" of the body since the source dances themselves, in their original forms, did not mechanically require the kind of "extra-daily" (Barba & Savarese, 1991:1) physical energy that the score demanded. In order to attain this physical energy, we imagined the energetic physicality of Nijinsky's original dance, based on what we knew of his choreography from watching Hodson's reconstruction, and tried to apply this energetic and forceful use of the body to the re-enactment of the different contemporary dances. Similarly, we also incorporated, at times, a mask-like use of the face by holding the face in taut configurations (as if wearing a mask) as a means to evoke a differently-human physicality. Like Nijinsky's original, a conscious attempt was thus made to try and capture the physical expressivity of a nostalgically imagined prehistoric, pre-industrial nature but through the gestures and actions of the late twentieth century.

So while this micropractice did not seek to re-enact the actual movements and actions of the 1913/1987 versions, a re-enactment of a past physicality did emerge, and through this traces of a particular historical, arguably 'primitivist', way of thinking about and using the

body.⁵⁹ Since both Nijinsky and Stravinsky's individual compositions are so deeply rooted in early twentieth-century European modernist yearnings for a return to nature and expressive of an arguably 'primitivist' understanding of what a prehistoric nature might move and sound like, these problematic paradigms and politics become archived in the physicalities of both the dancing bodies and the cadences of the score. While *The remembered rite* only makes use of actions sourced from a much more recent body-archive, the assumption of a Nijinsky-inspired physicality into the body (from both the score and Hodson's reconstruction as forms of documentation) creates, I suggest, a layering of time where bodies in the present, attempting to enact a post-apocalyptic future, perform gestures *and ideologies* from two separate temporal pasts. In this layering it thus becomes difficult to clearly identify and separate what is contemporary from what is past from what is imagined futurity, in terms of the actual actions, but also in terms of how one thinks about the body.

The conclusion to *The remembered rite* presents the three performers dancing the Electric Slide in unison. As a form of social line-dancing, the Electric Slide is typically danced in a constant, unfluctuating tempo by a group of people who move, together, along repetitive changing spatial lines. The dance has a relaxed physicality and, although the whole body is engaged, is focused on the movement of the feet. In *The remembered rite* these actions are imbued with a frenetic energy. The line dance is thus performed with augmented physical energy, with arms and faces held taut, body stooped low to the ground and punctuated by low jumps which stomp the ground below them. As Stravinsky's score for the *Sacrificial Dance* progressively increases in tempo, the line dance disintegrates into a frenzy as the performers struggle to match the steps of the dance to the fast-paced score. The actions of the original dance thus become changed through the overlaying of a different physicality, and a different way of thinking about the body, rooted ideologically in the past.

⁵⁹ I use the term 'primitivist' to refer ideologically to a notably Western understanding of 'primitive peoples' and 'primitive art', rooted in early modernism (in art, music, literature and dance). As Burt (1998) has noted, early American and European modern choreographers (such as Martha Graham and Mary Wigman) drew inspiration from what they perceived to be 'primitive cultures' (as Other to Western cultures) and whose art and dances were seen as "akin to the forces of life" (Graham in Burt, 1998:137), connected to nature and to the Earth in ways Western arts had 'forgotten.' Similarly, *The Rite of Spring*, as an imagining of Pagan Russia, arguably exhibits these ideological tendencies in both its score and Nijinsky's original choreography (see Kennel, 2005).

Micropractice two: The Leftover Sacre

The interest in the corporeal archiving of another (past) body's physicality, rather than its actual choreography, became the departure point for the second micropractice in the exploration of *The Rite*. This creative process occurred over a period of two months from December 2013 to January 2014 while I was serving as Artist-in-Residence at The Dance Space in Johannesburg. During the residency I worked with two other performers, Nomcebisi Moyikwa, with whom I had collaborated on *The remembered rite*, and a new performer, Joni Barnard. The resulting work, entitled *The Leftover Sacre*, was performed only once, on the 7th of February 2014, for a small audience at The Dance Space studio in Newtown, Johannesburg. The performance was shared as an installation, and scenographer for the project, Gavin Krastin, created a dark, cave-like environment in the small dance studio by filling the majority of the room with large amounts of both shredded and un-shredded paper. The back wall of the space was similarly covered in paper and depicted a hand-drawn timeline notating roughly fifty of the hundreds of previous interpretations of *The Rite* documented between 1913 and 2013.

The Leftover Sacre was conceived in response to the centennial anniversary of Nijinsky's original ballet. Like *The remembered rite*, the work had post-apocalyptic undertones by presenting three performers, in a strange haven-like space, embroiled in the dual tasks of trying to remember and re-enact fragments of past *Rites*, leftover in their bodies and noted, in written form, on the timeline. In creating the work, the intention was to extend the previous exploration by placing a much stronger emphasis on the legacy of *The Rite* and the residual traces of the physicalities of these many manifestations left in the bodies of those in the future. In terms of micropractice, we selected five previous versions of *The Rite* that we were able to access through video documentation as separate departure points, which could then be 'pushed' into the bodies of the performers. Once subsumed into the body-as-archive, these traces could then intermingle with the traces of other dances already contained there. The *Rites* selected for archiving included the Nijinsky/Hodson reconstruction (1913/1987), Maurice Bejart's 1959 version, Bausch's *Das Frühlingsopfer* (1975), Angelin Preljocaj's 2001 version, and Yvonne Rainer's *RoS Indexical* (2007). In each instance a similar micropractice was followed. This entailed watching fragments of the documentation of each work and then constructing an individual physical response to the encounter by trying to re-enact an

expression of the specific work's physicality as well as any remembered gestures and motifs.⁶⁰ These various individual expressions were then shared amongst the performers so that all three bodies contained each of the responses to each work. This varied, notably idiosyncratic, vocabulary (which engaged five distinct physicalities) constituted the raw movement material from which to construct the work.

Through a process of improvised play, two separate 'rites' (or vignettes) emerged from the fragmentation and were then re-combined differently from the various physicalities and motifs. The 'rites' were then placed in conversation with specific sections of Stravinsky's score.⁶¹ 'Rite I' was developed as a trio, performed mostly in unison, and constituted by motifs and a physicality inspired by the Nijinsky/Hodson manifestation of *The Rite*. Performed in conversation with the section of Stravinsky's score entitled *Augurs of Spring*, the dance is typified by hunched bodies, turned-in feet, bent knees and arms, percussive, forceful and impact-driven rhythms. 'Rite II' developed as a duet between the two female performers and involved a journey through four past *Rites* by shifting through each physicality in relation to the score. The dance begins with Preljocaj's version, morphs into Rainer's and then Bausch's, and culminates in a physicality reminiscent of Bejart's rendition, where each shift corresponds with a different section of the score (beginning with *Ritual of the Rival Tribes*, moving into *Procession of the Sage*, and ending with *Dance of the Earth*). In terms of physicality, 'Rite II' begins with an overtly seductive, somewhat balletic use of the body (with an emphasis on line and linear pathways of gestures), and becomes aloof and playfully pedestrian with a markedly economical use of physical energy (from Rainer's version). It then shifts into Bausch's version through the relentless repetition of an accumulating phrase, where the weight, physical abandon and expressivity of the body is emphasised, and concludes with an aggressive, violent pounding of the two bodies together in response to Bejart's 'orgasmic' ending of his

⁶⁰ Methodologically, I decided from the onset that each encounter with the documentation would occur only once and that the embodied translation of this encounter through enactment needed to take place right after the consumption of the archive, while the experience was recent. This was conceived as a way to minimise the copying of actual movements and to necessitate, instead, a creative engagement with the use of the body in a broader sense.

⁶¹ The score itself is also somewhat fragmented in the work and does not follow the linear progression of the narrative structure in which it was originally composed.

rendition.⁶² The performers change physically and spatially as each new Rite is re-enacted, facing a different direction or moving in a different spatial relationship to each other.

Despite the clear shifts in intention and physicality that occur in each transformation and in each of the two 'Rites,' there remains a constant unifying force that connects and holds these different physical expressions together – namely the active bodies of the performers in the present. Although emerging from distinct traces, each physicality inevitably merges and moulds with the unique physicality of the performer. The actualising of the traces through the body-as-archive is thus revealed as a composite process in which past and present physicalities combine in composition with each other, differently.

Micropractice three: Sacre for one

The final micropractice, which took place in May and June of 2016, was rooted in a desire to further push and explore the capacity of a body to assume the many traces of *The Rite of Spring*, as explored in the earlier investigations, by locating this archive in a single body. In each of the previous explorations the holding and re-enactment of the traces of other bodies had been a communal and shared endeavour. In this instance, I was interested to know what might happen if these traces, and the responsibility of their re-enactment, were relocated into my body alone. Additionally, I was intrigued by the idea of adding to this archive the traces of the two earlier *Rites* I had created and to explore what might happen if both *The remembered rite* and *The Leftover Sacre* combined with the traces of other past *Rites* in one performance event.

After making *The Leftover Sacre* I was also made more consciously aware of the genealogical layer of the research, and of the possible insights, questions and connections that could potentially occur through the temporal and spatial middle-ground that this work provided – where *Rites* from vastly different places and time periods could momentarily exist alongside and in relation to each other. By re-positioning this endeavour in a single body, I was interested to find out what genealogical potentials might emerge and what new meanings, ideas or insights this archival time warp might reveal.

⁶² In Bejart's *Rite*, rather than ending with the conventional sacrificial dance, his version concludes with the symbolic coitus and orgasm between male and female dancers.

As an exploratory micropractice, I followed a similar strategy to that of *The Leftover Sacre*, using performance documentation of specific past *Rites* as territories from which to depart in a process that involved the ‘pushing’ of fragments of these past dances and their unique physicalities into my own body. In revisiting this strategy, I spent considerably more time watching and engaging with each of the documentations. While it was still not my intention to meticulously learn the actual choreography of these past dances, I allowed more time to engage with each performance so that I could complement the feeling evoked by watching each dance with a more considered choreological analysis of *how* the bodies moved in each rendition.⁶³ In addition to the five *Rites* already explored in the previous micropractice, I also added a sixth – Xavier Le Roy’s 2007 *Le Sacre du Printemps* – in which he conducts the musical score while facing the audience, as if they are an orchestra. I then repeated this process with the performance documentation of *The remembered rite* and *The Leftover Sacre* as a means to incorporate those parts of the dances that I did not already have stored (somewhere) in my body. From this place, as a body containing many *Rites*, I began to experiment, again, with the actualising of these traces in various other potential constructions and arrangements to uncover other ways in which they might juxtapose with each other. I was also much more conscious in the repetition of this process of how these traces related to the already existing languages, codes and physicalities of my body-as-archive, and the instances where these fusions either complemented, enabled, hindered or complicated the re-enactment of these other bodies.

Through this process, re-considered embodiments of *The remembered rite* as well as ‘Rites I and II’ from *The Leftover Sacre*, emerged where the earlier ensemble iterations were re-formed onto a single, constantly moving body. ‘Rite II’ in particular, underwent substantial transformation, with a reordering of the progression from one physicality to the next as well as the replacing of the Bejart re-enactment with Le Roy’s version. In addition, the need to speak during this ‘Rite’ emerged as a means to more directly (and clearly) share with the audience the origins of each changing re-enactment, as well as my personal connection or response to each individual version, as they happened. I also included at the end of this ‘Rite’ a moment where the linear journey from one physicality to the next could be disrupted by

⁶³ This choreological analysis was both choreutic and eukinetic – using principles drawn from Laban Movement Analysis with regards to action (what the body does in relation to space) as well as effort (the body’s use of weight and time to create dynamic).

trying to actualise all five virtual physicalities, simultaneously. An additional 'Rite III' was created from the substituted Bejart vocabulary, which maintained its original form as a duet encounter, but reimagined as a duet between a human body and an object-body (a transparent life-size plastic cut-out of a body) rather than between two human bodies. This presented an interesting challenge – to re-enact a past *Rite* that relied heavily on the partnered, proximal and sexually-charged encounter between two dancers, with an object that stands in for a human body, but is not one, and has its own unique materiality and agency (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: Alan Parker in *Sacre for one*. Photographer: Robin Elam-Rye

This particular micropractice led to an interesting conundrum that had not surfaced in either of the two earlier processes, and which, in many ways, came to constitute a pivotal choreographic problem in performing the work. A significant discrepancy emerged between the *capacity* of the body-as-archive to assume virtual traces of a multiplicity of past bodies

and its *ability* to actualise these traces, physically. This is a conundrum alluded to by Houston, noted earlier, when she acknowledges the existence of imprints of past movements still in her body but which “encounter a piece of machinery that is slowing” (in Griffiths, 2013:192). As the performance started to take form, with the progression from one ‘Rite’ to the next (with a resulting duration of roughly forty minutes), it became clear that my body, at that moment, was not dance-fit enough, nor athletic enough, to re-enact each of the past bodies at full energetic capacity. As such, each performance was a genuine physical struggle – a task made more challenging by the work’s structure which became progressively more energetic as it unfolded. Although this was in keeping with tradition – by virtue of the fact that *The Rite* typically builds toward the relentless and climatic *Sacrificial Dance* of death – there remained a palpable discrepancy between the particularities of the traces themselves and my limited physical ability to keep up with these other dancing bodies. I had, in essence, choreographed a dance that I was, in some ways, incapable of dancing.

This problem highlighted the particular symbiotic relationship between the body-as-archive, in this micropractice, and the traces of the bodies it holds. In this process of storing and actualising the virtual traces of past bodies, the body-as-archive is not a medium for the channelling of ghostly absences whose behaviours are animated through the body as a vessel. Neither, however, is the re-enactment of these distinct and nuanced physicalities merely a matter of pretend – of playing at moving like someone else, or impersonating a past body as a character. Rather, the process of actualising the traces of past bodies in this process felt more like co-composing. In this way, at no point do the various trace-bodies become incorporated into one with the performing, material body, despite their common relocation into this singular soma. In order to actualise, the traces must co-compose with the material body. Stated differently, both body and trace must *reach towards* each other, in an active intentionality, where the moment preceding their touching becomes their actualising. This actualising, I suggest, is thus also more-than both the trace-body and the material body, in separation, but something that exceeds both through a “recomposition” (Manning, 2009:217) that occurs through their reaching.

An anarchival politics of touch – or, who has the right to ‘Rite’?

In her book, *Politics of touch* (2007), Manning theorises touch beyond its understanding as a physical sensation, by considering touch, instead, as an active and inquisitive intentionality located in the interval prior to contact, where touch is understood as a ‘reaching-toward’ the unknowable. Manning suggests, “With touch, I enter (into communication with) you, with you I create the interval between me and you” (2007:11). This interval, formed between two bodies who reach-out from themselves through a desire to know, becomes, Manning argues, “a moment of sharing that potentially exceeds the two individuals” (2007:54). Sharing, in this instance, is also conceived as more-than the sharing of actual tactility, but a synaesthetic gesture of intentionality that is open to, and inclusive of, other sensorial kinds of reaching, where touch is also “a hearing-with, a seeing-through [...]. It is to feel the shapeshifting of spacetime” (Manning, 2009:212). For Manning, touch, as “reaching-toward” that which is unknown, thus becomes more than “simply a sense event: it is a technique for recomposition” (2009:217), where virtual forces and energies of both entities enter into processes of co-becoming in the interval between them.

Burt, in his paper, *History, memory, and the virtual in current European dance practice* (2009), recognises the political potentialities of this kind of reaching-toward that Manning theorises, in dance works where bodies in the present reach (backwards) towards those in the past. He suggests: “By placing more emphasis on the temporal than the spatial aspects of dance, these works hold potential for social transformation because they hint at possible alternative futures” (2009:445). Burt alludes here to the capacity of dance, where reaching-toward occurs between bodies across historical time periods, to make time both visible and sensible to its beholders. In this instance, the embodiment of memory in the present, through its recomposition with bodies in the past, presents for the audience an encounter where “what is present turns into the past while there is, at the same moment, an anticipation of possible futures” (2009:462). Burt acknowledges in these works a disruptive force, emerging from the tension arising between official histories of past dances (as written by dance critics, historians, academics and their institutions) and their unsanctioned, uncontrolled, atemporal recomposing through the body in performance. This is a notably anarchival function of the body-as-archive that Lepecki also recognises as a political act – namely its ability to “harness futurities by releasing pastness away from its many archival ‘domiciliations’” (2010:35). Both

Burt and Lepecki, through their discussion of several artists and performances as examples, point to a necessary audaciousness in this recomposition – where processes of re-enactment are entered into by bodies reaching-toward past bodies as “fugitives”, that is, as ‘unofficial’ bodies who “suspend economies of authoritative authors” by seeking to re-enact as a means “to expel, to ex-propriate, to excorporate under the name of a promise called giving” (Lepecki, 2010:35).⁶⁴

Through its audacity, this act of touching, I would argue, becomes anarchival because it significantly disrupts the barriers and measures of control that the archive and other, similar, institutions of power establish in order to protect, maintain and control particular histories. The body-as-archive thus has great anarchival potential in its ability to reach (back) towards, to touch a multiplicity of bodies in the past irrespective of genealogical legacies, bureaucratic authorisations or exclusionary delineations dictating rights of access. The potential to actualise differently, and thus to reimagine alternative futurities, lies in the *difference* between the body who reaches back and that towards which it reaches. It is, for example, the difference between a re-enacting of Graham’s *Lamentations* (1929) by one of Graham’s sanctioned, extensively trained and mentored protégés and Richard Move, a six-foot drag queen who, despite having never danced for the Graham Company, reaches back toward her most famous dances in an act of recomposition. It is through his unsanctioned, fugitive body, I would argue, that these works from the past, as well as their original intended meanings and/or politics, are suitably disrupted as a means to explore different potential afterlives – separate from the control exerted by the custodians of her official archive – in a body that may have no legal right to touch her archive, but does have the audacity and the will.⁶⁵

In *Sacre for one*, I suggest that there are two layers of reaching-toward that can be seen to occur. The first, as already noted, is akin to the fugitive reaching (back) towards those dancing bodies of the past through the body-as-archive, as explicated above. On another level,

⁶⁴ Lepecki, for example, cites the archiving of Graham’s repertoire by Move as a ‘fugitive’ act which removes the works from the power and control of the author as a means to re-actualise these works differently, through an ‘unauthorised’ body. Similarly, Burt refers to the work *Fake It!* by Slovenian director Janez Janša which includes the unsanctioned re-enactment of several famous works from the canon of Western contemporary dance. See Lepecki (2010:40-44) and Burt (2009:460-465).

⁶⁵ As Lepecki (2010) notes, this ‘will’ does, however, remain in a context of copyright law, and as such, Move has been, in the past, served with Cease and Desist orders from Graham’s foundation. Move’s audacity, therefore, does have legal implications.

however, the performance of the work as an “anarchic share” (Manning, 2016a:67) also constitutes a kind of reaching-toward to touch, but one occurring explicitly in the present moment of the event, between the performer and the audience. Like *Detritus for one*, *Sacre for one* explicitly emphasises the nowness of the audience-performer encounter, where a concerted effort is made to engage with the audience directly and in a manner that does not appear overly rehearsed and is, at times, recognised as the self of the performer. This attempted relationship with the audience is clarified, I would suggest, when understood through touch as a reaching-toward, because this is largely what the encounter strives for. While physical contact with the audience is not intended nor necessary, when speaking and engaging with the audience directly, the desire in *Sacre for one* is often to try to narrow the gap between myself as the performer (on the stage) and the audience as spectators (in the auditorium) – to establish a closeness where the *potential* to touch is felt as a possibility without physical touch actually occurring. Similarly, this reaching-toward is intended to open an interval between performer and spectator – a between space where the performer is not only recognised as himself but where his ordinariness is felt as a shared common trait.

There are three particular moments of this reaching-toward in the work, interspersed between the dancing of the various ‘Rites’, in which the performer (me) speaks directly to the audience as a means to reveal the personal self of the performer. In the first encounter I approach the edge of the stage and confess: “My name is Alan Parker, and I have a problem. This is the third time I have made a *Rite of Spring*.” Later, I carry a small stool to the foot of the stage, sit down and state:

I have a confession. This *Sacre* is for one. It’s a solo. It’s just me. And this is mostly because I couldn’t afford to employ any other dancers ... And this makes me uncomfortable because the *Rite of Spring*, in my opinion, is fundamentally about women. It is not a man’s story, nor is it a story about men.

Before dancing *The remembered rite*, towards the end of the work, I again approach the audience and admit: “I have another confession. I have lied to you. I have never actually danced any of these pieces. So my body doesn’t actually remember any of them. I had to teach my body to remember them. But I do remember some other dances.” Each confession, I suggest, thus reveals an insecurity or serves to demystify an aspect of the choreographic process as a means to render the dancer on stage less of an “athlete of God” (Graham in LaMathe, 2006:x) by emphasising a shared ordinariness. As *The Rite* is most often danced by

highly-trained, virtuosic athletes who do not overtly perform *themselves*, the performance of *The Rite*, I would argue, is typically positioned outside of the realm and capabilities of everyday, non-dancer, people. The performer in *Sacre for one*, I suggest, potentially disrupts this positioning through this narrowing of the gap between the dancer and the audience.

Both Kei Ella (2016) and Adriana Jamisse (2016) acknowledge this perceived ordinariness in their responses to the work. Ella (2016) notes: “Something about how honest he is, how unpretentious, echoes in his dancing ... overall the piece is so human one cannot look away.” Similarly, Jamisse (2016) describes her experience of the work by recognising “a closeness to the performer (during the performance) that makes me uncomfortable and aware of my own conditioning in relation to theatre.” In both instances, a different kind of performer/audience relationship is acknowledged, where the divide between performer and spectator is blurred through the equalising interval of their touching.

This layer of reaching-toward is, in many ways, in contrast to the other layer of reaching-toward that occurs in the dancing of each of the various ‘Rites’. In these instances, the performer’s reaching-toward the audience is either interrupted or overlaid with this other act of reaching, moving backwards in time, to connect with other absent bodies. The result of this dual reaching, I suggest, is that while one act serves to emphasise the performer’s self and shared human ordinariness with the audience, the other evokes presences in the work who are more-than human, and who increasingly and often, clash with the reality of the moment and of the desubjectivised body of the performer embroiled in the re-enacting. This is most prevalent in the dancing of *The remembered rite* at the end of the work, where the pounding and evocative archive of Stravinsky’s score is contrasted with a visibly exhausted body, dancing the Macarena and other equally ordinary, non-specialist dances, and who is clearly struggling to *keep up with* and *match* the energies, speeds and virtualities conveyed through Stravinsky’s *Sacrificial dance*.

Burt acknowledges that, through Stravinsky’s evocative and widely used score, *The Rite of Spring*, in particular, exists within a significantly extensive “cloud of virtualities” (2009:448). He suggests that because this score has been used so many times by so many (often world-renowned) choreographers in many different ways, it is inevitable that “Stravinsky’s music evokes memories” (2009:453) for those who experience it. Similarly, he

suggests, “even if beholders are unaware of these earlier ballets, they will undoubtedly experience the inexorable drive and irregular rhythms of Stravinsky’s dissonant music” (2009:458), which he proposes, contains and evokes its own perceivable virtual forces. To watch a *Rite of Spring* thus involves an encounter that is, inevitably, “a dialogue between memories of prior *Rites*, the movements performed in this version, and the virtual power that ... seems to drive [the] dancers” (2009:458).⁶⁶ In her review of *Sacre for one*, Ella (2016) alludes to this filtering of the present through memories of the past when she observes: “Instead of the mass of sweating dancers sacrificing themselves in unison in this relentlessly reconstructed ballet, Parker is alone. Entangled in the *Sacre*’s that have come before him.”⁶⁷

Burt recognises, in this encounter with memory through performance, a potential for new insights or realisations that extend beyond the ballet, its narratives and politics. He proposes that, through an encounter with performance, there are “ways in which the power of history and memory can be appropriated to intensify beholders’ experiences and to encourage them to reflect on who they are and how they relate to others” (2009:454). Burt articulates here a potential new knowledge, concerning identity that can be gained through reflective processes encouraged by disruptive encounters with the body-as-archive in performance. This emerges, he suggests, from dance’s ability to make time visible and connects to the reimagining of other possible futures that a temporal fusing of past and present might elicit.

In *Sacre for one*, the dual act of reaching-toward creates, I suggest, a potentially similar environment by positioning *The Rite* and all its past and present virtualities and trace-form bodies within a materially-present, fugitive body. This juxtapositioning establishes an open field out of which a multiplicity of other politics, thoughts, themes, ideas and realisations might emerge, and which may or may not be directly connected to any singular past *Rite*. Following the performance in Cape Town, one audience member articulated her displeasure

⁶⁶ In this quotation Burt is speaking specifically about Raimond Hoghe’s use of Stravinsky’s music in his work *Young people, old voices* (2002). His observation of this work is applicable to *Sacre for one* and I have edited Burt’s statement so that it can extend beyond Hoghe’s example. See Burt (2009:453-460).

⁶⁷ Interestingly, Ella seems to combine multiple potential versions of the *Rite* in this one description. “The mass of sweating dancers” would be an appropriate description of Bausch’s version, in which the sweat of the performers is emphasised through the soil on which they dance (which sticks to and dirties the bodies as the work progresses). However, only one performer in Bausch’s version sacrifices herself. “Dancers sacrificing themselves in unison” could also refer to Bejart’s version which includes a stage awash with dancers who thrust against each other in unison at the ballet’s climax.

in encountering this particular *Rite*, performed within this particular body, in a comment on the Cape Town Fringe website. She writes:

I must say I was quite flabbergasted by this 'performance' – I have seen this ballet several times and was interested in seeing another interpretation, but I expected the performer to at least be able to dance. I did not expect an overweight, unfit, non-dancer in red underpants doing ... what exactly? How this won an award is a mystery to me. Can I get a refund? (Annemarie, 2016)

In an analogous, but less incensed manner, Jamisse articulates a similar experience resulting from the clashing between the body on stage and her own expectations and understandings of *The Rite of Spring*. She writes:

I felt as if Parker was making visible and physical his internal journey, while simultaneously appealing to my own experiences of the several versions of the rite of spring, my own connotations with certain songs and/or musical scores, and movements ... It is a work that left me to my thoughts, and poked my own conceptualisations of dance and performance. (Jamisse, 2016)

Later in her response Jamisse notes:

It is a work that is somehow hard to digest and difficult to remember for what it was ... I remember the mental confusion I felt after watching it and a deep sense of self-betrayal as audience member for being so nakedly exposed to my own expectations, experiences and understandings of dance as opposed to someone else's.

Both responses seem to allude to the audacity of the body-as-archive in *Sacre for one* and its ability to disrupt known or expected understandings of *The Rite of Spring* through its difference to the many bodies who have previously danced it.

This audacious difference, as a body that is too ordinary (in its insecure, overweight, unfit, seemingly non-dancer appearance) and which elevates popular non-specialist dances to the level of concert dance, manifests a different body politics, and raises questions about the dance politics and archive politics that surround the many versions of *The Rite of Spring* and its mythology in their combined recomposition with the body of the performer. These politics reveal important, alternative questions relating to access and privilege in the realm of dance (and beyond) – probing who can dance the canon? How does one dance the canon? What are we dancing when we re-enact? And more importantly, why? Why is it necessary reach back to past dances? What is gained when we reimagine audaciously?

While Annemarie is merely “flabbergasted” by this questioning and wants her money back, Jamisse (2016) describes feeling a “deep sense of self-betrayal” when confronted by this disruption, rooted in the realisation (or reminding) of the difference between her “understanding of dance as opposed to someone else’s.” Jamisse’s description of her response to the work is indicative, I suggest, of Burt’s assertion of the “power of history and memory ... to intensify beholders’ experiences” (Burt, 2009:454). Here a micro-questioning of identity in relation to the past occurs, which, Burt contends, opens up the possibility of “an impossible community that is not yet but about to become” to be imagined – a community that can “exist outside normative definitions of recognizable identities” (2009:465) – where (all) bodies dance, audaciously.

What the body-as-archive in *Sacre for one* does is displace *The Rite* and its cloud of virtualities outside of its sanctioned archive of memory and thus outside of its mythology. From this marginal space, which is genealogical in its form, *The Rite*, I suggest, can be re-considered outside of “the myths of traditional history” that are created by archival records, as a means to “find something altogether different” (Burt, 2004:31). In this way *Sacre for one* creates a counter to the “process of reification” which, as Burt has noted, is often a result of “the discourse of dance history as it creates the canon” – where “normative historiography can sometimes contribute to the process through which the potentially subversive physicality of the body is in effect erased” (2004:30). By reaching (back) toward those dancing bodies in the past, anarchivally, the mythology of *The Rite* is de-reified and through this act, non-normative and alternate bodily subversions, which are incipient to *The Rite*, are able to re-emerge, differently.

Widening the field

Burt’s hopes for “an impossible community that is not yet but about to become” (2009:465) alludes to the kinds of alternative futurities that anarchival engagement with the archive elicits. Benjamin’s ragpicker seeks and then puzzles together discarded fragments of history as a means to discover, through their recomposition, what “sudden” or “unexpected” (Le Roy, 2017:131) conversations might begin between them. Likewise, the recomposing of past and present moments in performance surfaces the beginnings of sudden or unexpected

conversations, about other, alternative ways of reaching-toward from the present into the unknowable and untouchable future.

In further examining the intricacies of reaching (back) toward as an anarchival strategy and its potentials for the disruption of (past) knowledges, Part 2 of this chapter considers two performance works by Nelisiwe Xaba. It is my intention to show that by re-looking at Xaba's *The Venus* through the lens of touch, or more specifically, as a choreographic reaching (back) towards, a different understanding of the individual works emerges while also facilitating a deeper understanding of this particular anarchival strategy.

PART 2: REACHING (BACK) TOWARD AND THE DISRUPTION OF KNOWLEDGE

The Venus is a title that collectively refers to two related, but notably distinct, solo performance works, created and performed by Nelisiwe Xaba. Both works bear a conceptual or thematic relation to the figure and body of Sarah (Saartjie) Baartman, the early nineteenth-century Khoi woman who became a 'sensation' in Europe as "a human curiosity" (Gordon-Chipembere, 2006:56) through her performance and display as The Hottentot Venus, first on English stages and later within the brutal human fairs of colonial Europe. The first work, *They look at me and that's all they think*, originally created in 2006, has over the last decade become somewhat canonical within South African contemporary dance. The work continues to be widely studied and taught in tertiary education institutions and has also been the focus of a considerable amount of research, both locally and abroad (Coly, 2019; Elliott, 2010; Piccirillo, 2011 & 2014; Sichel, 2011 & 2018; Wilkins Catanese, 2010; Wright, 2015). The second work, *Sakhozi says NON to the Venus*, created in 2008, has also been widely performed around the world but is, comparatively speaking, less canonical, due perhaps to its harsher tone and a much more overt politics.⁶⁸ Beyond their common reference to Baartman, the two works are, as Xaba suggests, "opposites and complementary at the same time" (in Piccirillo, 2011:72). They are complementary in the sense that they are both expanded by their conversation with

⁶⁸ Both works in *The Venus* are collaborative in nature. *They look at me and that's all they think* was created in collaboration with South African design studio Strangelove. *Sakhozi says NON to the Venus* is a collaboration between Xaba, director Toni Morkel and digital artist Mocke J Van Veuren.

each other as a kind of Baartman 'double-bill.'⁶⁹ More so, however, the two works are starkly different, in terms of their visual aesthetic as well as their distinct choreographic intentions, and are thus better understood, as Xaba suggests, as opposites, where the repetition of a thematic interest results, importantly, in difference.

The difference between *They look at me* and *Sakhozi* creates a helpful space in which to further explicate a deeper sense of reaching (back) toward as a choreographic, anarchival strategy and how, in this specific instance, a disruption of knowledge can be seen to occur. While it is not my position to suggest that either of these works were created by Xaba through an intentional engaging of touch as a choreographic strategy, I do propose that each work benefits from, and is expanded by, a retroactive re-looking from the perspective of touch. This re-looking seeks to identify how each work illustrates a particular instance where a reaching (back) towards a body in the past occurs. Further than this, I suggest that a comparative analysis of these works through the lens of touch, offers an alternative way in which to think about and understand these established or historical performances, where new insight is gained through close attention to how each work *works* differently: how each dance reaches (back) toward in significantly different ways.

Situating the audacious act

In both *They look at me* and *Sakhozi*, Xaba establishes a connection between herself, as a travelling performer of African origin performing for a (mostly foreign, white) audience in the present, and Baartman, also a performer of African origin performing for a (foreign, white) audience, albeit in very different circumstances, in the past. Xaba explains, "I wanted to do Sarah Baartman, but not telling only her story, but using my history as a performer who always has to go out and perform in foreign places" (in Piccirillo, 2011:73). Through this parallel that Xaba draws between her own experience and the historically documented narrative of Baartman's life, Xaba positions these works as a means through which to raise questions about, problematise and expose the historical genealogies of a plethora of contemporary

⁶⁹ I use the term 'double-bill' loosely here. The works do not have to be performed one after the other (as an actual double-bill) in order for this conversation to take place. The connecting of the works by a single title establishes this conversation and implies that both performances should be engaged with together, rather than separately, although each work can (and often does) stand on its own.

issues relating to the representation (and spectatorial consumption) of the black female body and the geopolitics of African-European (im)migrations.

Xaba's genealogical connection, and thus her 'right' to touch Baartman's body-archive can thus be seen to be premised on a series of assumed embodied commonalities existing between the two women: both (South) African, both black, both female, both regularly exoticised by the white European gaze by virtue of their situation as performers, and both forced to travel and 'sell' themselves abroad (Baartman through colonial enslavement, Xaba through economic circumstances).⁷⁰ Despite these connections, and thus a potential right to engage in this way with Baartman's body, Xaba's act of touching is still, arguably, an audacious one. Natasha Gordon-Chipembere (2006) has, for instance, sharply criticised female African-American authors who, following the repatriation of Baartman's remains back to Hankey, South Africa in 2002 (they had previously been on display at the *Musée de l'Homme* in Paris until the 1970s), "used her plight as an exploited woman to create new articulations for celebrating the black female body and voice" (2006:54).

Gordon-Chipembere is critical, in this context, of the replication of the behaviour of Baartman's "colonial masters" who, she argues, continue to "ultimately silence her experience" (2006:55). By trying to 'speak for' Baartman, she argues, contemporary African-American authors are guilty of re-writing their own personal narratives of identitarian politics through "western notions of constructed 'blackness'" (2006:61), and in so doing essentially write-over Baartman's own unique story with their own. She suggests that "no-one can speak for Sarah" and "to really understand Sarah Baartman is to know that she speaks for herself" (2006:61). Gordon-Chipembere concludes her paper by stating: "It is a dangerous moment in history when Baartman, newly buried in Hankey, is conjured up again by Sowetan dancer-choreographer, Nelisiwe Xaba to inspire a 20-minute dance piece performed in Paris" (2006:61). In addition to the assumption that, like the authors that Gordon-Chipembere critiques, Xaba's performance constitutes another act of 'speaking for' Baartman, her issue with Xaba's audacious act concerns a perception that the conjuring of Baartman's body

⁷⁰ While Baartman was not technically a slave, as Pumla Gqola (2010:15) has shown, the treatment of her body and her conditions were distinctly similar to those legally regarded as slaves.

through performance (specifically in Paris) represents a “desire to relegate Baartman back to Europe” (2006:61).

Megan Wright (2015) articulates a similar criticism of Xaba’s embodied act in *They look at me* through a comparative analysis with Portuguese choreographer Vera Mantero’s conjuring of Josephine Baker in her work *one mysterious Thing, said e.e. cummings* (1996).⁷¹ For Wright, the audacity in Xaba’s act is attributed to her use, and more specifically, her performative representation, of Baartman’s “subaltern” (Spivak, 1988) body as a “tool for post-colonial amelioration” but which, she argues, “remains effectively silenced and objectified” through the “clouding of self-interest over the subject’s immediacy and autonomy” (Wright, 2015:33). Like Gordon-Chipembere’s critique of African-American authors, Wright suggests that although Xaba’s intentions are to “emancipate, and thus give a voice to” (2015:31) the figure of Baartman, her “acute awareness of her own racial and gendered identity” (2015:33) serves to speak for Baartman. Similarly, Wright suggests, the double objectification that occurs through Baartman’s representation in the work, continues (and reinforces) the exploitation of her body on the basis of its perceived otherness and difference.

The narrative of Baartman’s experience, as a subaltern body and voice, thus becomes particularly contentious. Although remnants of her story exist through documents in the archive, Baartman’s body within this notably Western archive is positioned, quite literally, as a “living corpse” (Bogues, 2012:34), an “improperly buried” body that has been “abjected even in death, denied ground, place and peace by history’s hegemonic narratives and forces” (Avery Gordon in Lepecki, 2006:107).⁷² So as much as Baartman’s name has, as Brandi Wilkins Catanese (2010:47) suggests, become “synonymous with the spectacularization of the black female body” and as much as her legacy, as “an icon of postcoloniality and the regeneration of a post-apartheid national and cultural identity” (Piccirillo, 2014:3), is particularly prolific in current popular history, her body remains principally untouchable. In this way, Xaba’s reaching (back) toward Baartman’s body, in both *They look at me* and *Sakhozi*, constitutes an audacious act. Through this act Xaba moves toward Baartman’s politically charged and historically

⁷¹ See Wright (2015:35-40) for her comparative analysis of Mantero’s work. Also, Lepecki (2006:106-122) analyses this work by Mantero in his chapter in *Exhausting dance* entitled, ‘The melancholic dance of the postcolonial spectral: Vera Mantero summoning Josephine Baker.’

⁷² Parts of Baartman’s body were dissected, preserved and then displayed as archival objects after her death.

marked body through a “minor gesture” (Manning, 2016a) that can be seen to reach-toward this other, different body, as a means to establish a connection in the tumultuous interval conjured between them.

Reaching (back) towards as a minor gesture

In *The minor gesture*, Manning develops and expands on her understanding of reaching-toward as a means of recomposition through her theorising of, what she refers to as, the minor gesture. Like the micro- prefix in micropractice, micropolitics and microperception, her use of the word minor to describe this act of gesturing does not denote its smallness in number, scale or significance, but rather serves to align the action with Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the Minor and minoritarian politics.⁷³ For Manning, the minor gesture is an action and a doing that initiates micropolitical (as well as macropolitical) change – a “gestural force that opens experience to its potential variation ... from within experience itself, activating a shift in tone, a difference in quality” (2016a:1).

From this understanding the minor gesture also constitutes, in many ways, a line of flight and thus a deterritorialising movement from a known territory to an unknown elsewhere. Manning explains: “The event and the minor gesture are always in co-composition, the minor gesture punctuating process, moving the welling event in new and divergent directions that alter the orientation of where the event might otherwise have settled” (2016a:3). This ability to initiate “new and divergent directions” also positions the minor gesture as a “site of dissonance” (2016a:2) that has the potential to lead towards alternatives within the macropolitical or the Major. In this way, Manning proposes,

The minor gesture is a force for freedom. For the gesture is only a minor gesture insofar as it opens the way, insofar as it creates the conditions for a different ecology of time, space, of politics ... gesturing always toward a futurity present in the act, but as yet unexpressed. (2016a:23-24)

Reaching-toward, understood as a minor gesture, thus presents an interval between two bodies who, prior to touch, also create an alternative ecology – a subversive environment within which bodies relate to each other as well as their surroundings.

⁷³ As discussed in Chapter Two. See also Deleuze and Guattari (1987/1980:291).

This ecology, Manning argues, is “more-than-human, composed as much of the force of atmosphere, of duration, of rhythm, than it is of something we might call the body-envelope” (2016a:126). In this sense, reaching-toward another body, choreographically, becomes more than a relational act between the two bodies themselves, located in two different moments, and creates instead a “plane of experience” where “choreographic thinking” (2016a:127) emerges through the composition of an ecology. This ecology, Manning proposes, becomes “an opening for a politics that doesn’t begin with or settle into form ... that refuses to know in advance what it can become” (2016a:127). Manning describes here a choreography, and a choreographic thinking, that has less to do with the physical body and its movement and is more concerned with the creation of ecologies within which bodies experience change. Choreographically, the minor gesture, and thus reaching-toward, functions to initiate a questioning of the body and how “it becomes in relation to a changing environment” where “what it *does* in that relation is what it is” (2016a:190, emphasis in original). In the context of performance, then, the ecology created through the minor gesture of reaching-toward is one that audience members are also a part of because their bodies share in the interval’s ecology and thus they participate in the body’s becoming more-than and its incipient “call to freedom” (2016a:24).

If one considers *They look at me* and *Sakhozi* through the perspective of the minor gesture, Xaba’s particular reaching (back) towards Baartman’s body in each work can be conceived as a conjuring of alternate ecologies. Within each of these distinct ecologies, I would argue, Xaba’s body does not speak for Baartman nor is her conjuring limited to a representational paradigm where Baartman’s spectre is re-presented in the work. Furthermore, I propose that the difference between these two ecologies and strategies for choreographic thinking, provide clarity and further understanding of how reaching (back) toward works, anarchivally.

Reaching (back) towards the Venus, differently

Annalisa Piccirillo has observed in Xaba’s Baartman-inspired works an ability to re-figure the archive into what she refers to as a “postcolonial matri-archive” (2014:1). Like the anarchiv, Piccirillo’s matri-archive is a counter-archive and thus an addition to (rather than a replacement of) the conventional or established “patri-archive” (2014:1). It is, she explains:

A re-figured space ... where female agency appears ... a space of hospitality where women are the 'archons': they 'commence' and 'command' their body writing; they innervate the 'conservation' and 'destruction' of body knowledge; they re-act against the dominant 'laws' transmitted by the Western patriarchal system of dance composition; they use their body-scape as a site of contested memory; they affect the dissemination of traditional choreographic gestures and re-inscribe the contemporary scene with new embedded body languages. (Piccirillo, 2014:1)

Piccirillo clarifies her use of the prefix re- in relation to this re-figuring of the archive and Xaba's "re-dancing" (Piccirillo, 2011:67) of the black African female body in her work. She suggests that the re- in this instance is not merely a repetition – a doing-again, differently – but refers to a desire "to express 'other' meanings, to re-narrate and [pose] resistance to the dominant discourses produced on the black female body and experienced by various groups of black women at different historical moments" (2011:68).

In her re-dancing of Baartman and the black female body, Piccirillo suggests that Xaba becomes a matri-archival "body-installation" (2014:8) through which "she begins to constitute new subjectivities, new positions of enunciation and identification" (2014:8). As a body-installation, Xaba's body is conceived as a "a ground of resistance" *on* which "alternative counter-memories and counter-dances can be engendered" (2014:8). I use the word 'on' here (as opposed to 'in' or 'through') in light of Piccirillo's specific conceptualising (after Fanon) of Xaba's subversive matri-archival propensity as something that emerges through a "practice of epidermalisation" (2014:8) – a re-writing and re-signifying of Baartman that takes place *on* Xaba's "body-surface" (2014:8). Piccirillo states: "Taking her [Xaba's] body as a grotesque 'canvas', as an animated 'screen', or as an overexposed 'frame', she re-writes Baartman's story in a new choreography/autobiography" (2014:8).⁷⁴

While Xaba does certainly use her body as a surface in both works – onto which various digital animations, light, shadow and costuming are projected – it seems reductive to the complexities of both works, as choreographic events, to isolate Xaba's re-dancing of Baartman's body, and thus her "ground of resistance" (2014:8), to her "epidermal schema" (2014:8) alone. This positionality seems to limit Xaba's subversion of the patri-archive to representational modes, where a subversion of re-signification is acknowledged, but where the actual *act* of objectification, implicitly enacted through the reading of her heavily inscribed

⁷⁴ Piccirillo's use of the terms "epidermalization" and "epidermal schema" are informed here by Fanon, as articulated in *Black skin, white masks* (Fanon, 1986/1952:13, 112).

and re-inscribed body, continues to maintain its privileged position as a dominant way of knowing. Similarly, to consider *They look at me* and *Sakhozi* as acts intending to “re-write Baartman’s story through choreography/autobiography” (2014:8) seems equally reductive. Although Xaba acknowledges a desire to tell Baartman’s story alongside her own as an originating impulse in creating the works (Piccirillo, 2011:73), I would argue that it is an oversimplification of their choreographic thinking to view either work as autobiographical (telling Xaba’s story) or biographical (telling Baartman’s story).

While both works emerge from an encounter between Xaba and Baartman and an interrogation of the degrees of their similarities and differences, neither *They look at me* nor *Sakhozi*, I contend, are necessarily *about* these two women and their respective stories. Rather, the coming-together of both bodies and stories manifests an experiential event that serves as a springboard and departure point for a re-imagining of the body that is significantly more-than either individual’s experiences. Furthermore, what emerges in the ecologies that Xaba creates between her own body, Baartman’s body and the bodies of her audience, surfaces a disruption of the archive that extends beyond modes of representation and the inscriptive violence enacted upon the black female body. An analysis of each work, through the perspective of reaching (back) toward as a minor gesture, will help elucidate these particular claims.

They look at me and that’s all they think

For an audience member encountering Xaba’s *They look at me* for the first time, the presence of Baartman’s body and story within the work is arguably equivocal. Unlike its sister work *Sakhozi says NON to the Venus*, *They look at me* does not make direct reference to Baartman and her archive through its title. The title itself is largely ambiguous – articulated as a statement that is made in the first person, and which serves to identify a ‘they’ who look and a ‘me’ who is looked at. The statement could be interpreted as being uttered by Xaba’s voice (which is perhaps the most likely assumption), Baartman’s voice, or ostensibly by any voice that has, in the past, been either reduced or underestimated through being looked at by another. It also surfaces, in a subtle sense, a particular interpretive behaviour where the perception of certain visual representations (what one sees) collude with judgements, ideologies and beliefs that are socio-culturally pre-encoded and are, genealogically speaking,

“historically contingent” (Anaïs, 2013:134). The title thus indicates a clear connection between perceiving and thinking or, more specifically, between cognitive thought processes that emerge from a visual perception. The title can thus be seen to encourage the kind of epidermal interpretation that Piccirillo suggests by highlighting, albeit ambiguously, the oppressive experience of the body within an “optical-visual” (Fenemore, 2003:109) framework or paradigm, where the surface of the “body-envelope” (Manning, 2016a:126) becomes a site of inscription, stereotyping, assumption, objectification and, ultimately, a victim of representational oppression and a Foucauldian destruction by history.

To encounter this work in isolation, that is, outside of its association with the collective title of *The Venus*, an audience member attending this performance might be relatively unaware that *They look at me* has anything at all to do with Baartman and her story.⁷⁵ In addition, Xaba’s work does not follow a clearly identifiable narrative or story, of her life or Baartman’s, and instead presents the audience with a series of interconnected, mostly fragmented, moving images which emerge from Xaba’s embodied encounters with a series of different objects within an environment of various sound scores, silences, and audio-visual projections. The work does not tell a story, but rather creates an assemblage of brief moments, encounters, interactions and tasks that unfold between the live body on stage, a retinue of objects, sounds and changing manifestations of light, and the bodies of those in the audience who experience the work.

Xaba’s layered presence in the work, as well as her complex framing of her body, further amplify the ambiguity and mystery within the work. For the majority of the twenty-minute performance Xaba presents herself as an object for the audience’s gaze and seems largely unconcerned with their presence and active looking. Although her body is the primary vehicle of expression, Xaba’s actual body is predominantly obscured for the majority of the performance by a voluminous white hoop skirt, which often conceals more than just the lower half of her body and which also becomes a screen behind which she dances, in silhouette. The skirt, Ayo Coly similarly observes, thus “overtakes her body and centers the gaze on the skirt and away from her body” (2019:202). Her relationship with the other objects in the work

⁷⁵ The work might, arguably, be pre-publicised as a response to Baartman. My point, however, is that based on the title (which is in many ways the artist’s first point of contact with their audience), a significant connection to Baartman is not overtly apparent.

(which include a metal ladder, a roll of bubble-wrap, a paper boat and a paper aeroplane) is evocative of Moten's (2003:1) observation of the "resistance of the object" intrinsic to many contemporary black radical performance traditions. As a body that is treated as an object (from the perspective of Western history and the archive) but which, as Moten argues, "can and does resist" (2003:1), Xaba surrounds her body with other objects to the point that there is often more object than actual body in the visual frame on stage.

It is seldom in the work that the audience actually sees Xaba's body entirely, as it is almost always covered, obscured or projected upon by other objects. When the audience enters the theatre, for example, Xaba is already sitting on the stage in her large white hoop skirt which encircles her on the floor, involved in a task of tying her bubble-wrap bundle onto her ladder. She is completely invested in this task and does not acknowledge the audience as they come in. After a while Xaba places her head on the floor and lifts her legs into the air. Through this inversion of her body, the skirt drops to cover the torso, arms and head of Xaba's body while revealing the half that was previously hidden. Xaba's now-exposed lower half is, however, covered in brightly coloured tights and underwear, and she wears high-heeled shoes. Although the physical inversion of her body results in the display of her legs and bottom, these body parts are brightly decorated and covered by other objects. Despite this, Coly argues, the action can be interpreted as Xaba "offering herself" (2019:203) to the audience as "a depersonalized black female body" (2019:202) and thus inviting "the objectification and sexualisation of her body" (2019:203).

From within this ambiguous environment, where Xaba is both object and body, but also not-object and not-body, Xaba, I suggest, initiates two concurrent acts of reaching-towards. The first of these minor gestures reaches (back) towards Baartman, as an act of inquisitive touch directed at an untouchable body with which Xaba seeks a knowing. The second act, however, is a reaching-toward that Xaba encourages between herself and those bodies in the audience that look at her. Importantly, as minor gestures, both acts of reaching occur through the micropolitical – that is, Xaba reaches back to Baartman and toward the audience through the forces of bodily experience and felt sensation.

Xaba's reaching (back) towards Baartman is an action that occurs throughout the duration of the work, where the broader act of performing itself becomes a gesture of

reaching-toward the virtual traces of this same behaviour, as enacted (albeit differently) by Baartman, in the past. There are, however, three particular moments in the work where, I would argue, Xaba's reaching-toward Baartman becomes significantly close: where the interval of virtual traces between her own body and experience in the present and Baartman's, in the past, border on actualisation as their almost-touching becomes perceivable through the taking-form of a moving image. Two of these moments are, in a sense, fragments of the same encounter and create an association with each other, facilitating a corresponding connection between the bodies of Xaba and Baartman.

Near the beginning of the work, Xaba presents a moving image that seems to evoke sensations both of journeying and drowning. In this moment Xaba pulls her skirt up to her neck so that only her head is visible, and she places a small boat (folded out of paper) on her head, like a hat. Xaba then dances within the skirt, whose fabric echoes the motions of her, mostly invisible, movements within. As she moves, the skirt often fills briefly with air and the fabric bellows around her head, creating the image, under the blue lighting state, of a boat caught on tumultuous seas. At times Xaba over-articulates the holding of her breath, with eyes wide and cheeks bloated. The moment is, however, first and foremost a dance. Xaba moves musically in response to a jazz scat score, creating visually evocative shapes and motions with the tube of fabric around her. The dance presents, on the surface, a spectacular theatrical use of costume and light, reminiscent of Loïe Fuller's famous skirt dances of the 1890s.⁷⁶ At a point in the dance, however, Xaba briefly evokes the sensation of drowning, where the billowing fabric almost completely engulfs her face and where the forces of the object enacted upon her body become less evocative as a source of visual pleasure and begin to *feel* more like an oppressive force of suffocation. The shift is brief, and Xaba soon returns to the safety of aesthetic spectacle.

At the end of the work Xaba returns to another image of journeying. In this final moment Xaba emerges from behind her skirt which has become a screen, and her body is now visible to the audience for the first time unobscured by the skirt, although still clothed. She approaches the audience slowly while unrolling a catwalk of constantly-popping bubble-wrap,

⁷⁶ Loïe Fuller (a precursor to American modern dance) was a well-known dancer, predominantly in Paris, who became famous through her art nouveau skirt dances where, using voluminous fabric and light, Fuller would create moving images of natural forms (such as fire, lilies, butterflies). See Sommer (1980).

which she then lies down upon and proceeds to cover her body again by rolling herself tightly inside the protective covering. Xaba then stands and makes significant eye-contact with the audience for the first time and seems to acknowledge, through her ambiguously saddened facial expression, their oppressive presence and complicit objectification of her body (and Baartman's) that has occurred by virtue of the event as a performance. As her final gesture Xaba creates a parting in her hair down the middle of her head and places a paper aeroplane in it, which, like the paper-boat earlier, she wears as a kind of hat.

The two images, although different in tone and action, are sensorially quite similar. In both actions an embodied and visceral sensation of journeying is evoked; first, through the tumultuous, constantly in-motion, often suffocating sensations of the ocean (by boat) and then later, through the comparatively static, tightly confined, equally suffocating packaging of the body-as-cargo (by plane). Xaba establishes through these images a correlation between her own embodied experience of travel and her imagining of Baartman's experience. What is significant here is that this experience is explored through the senses, and more specifically, through the tactility of a body's journey, actualised as an image through the body's encounter with the distinct tactilities of material objects (fabric, bubble-wrap and paper). In the first moving image, Xaba reaches toward a corporeal understanding of Baartman's experience of a journey. In the second moment, Xaba's image reaches back to the first, and through this, reaches back to Baartman. Through this connecting, Xaba does not equate the two journeys, but reaches toward, through touch and tactility, to create an interval where their somatic, sensorial and virtual differences constitute a brief, fleeting connection.

The third moment in the work where Xaba and Baartman's bodies become (dangerously) close to touching occurs, I suggest, mid-way through the performance and constitutes the most direct or unequivocal reaching-towards Baartman's body in the work. Towards the end of Xaba's skirt dance (described above), her dress opens to create a screen, which she stands behind, lit from the back so as to create a shadowy silhouette of her body which the audience sees on the surface of the screen. The audience watches the movements of Xaba's shadow as she undresses, removing her shirt. At a point in Xaba's undressing the song *Don't cha* (2005) by contemporary American girl group, The Pussycat Dolls, begins to play – *don't cha wish your girlfriend was hot like me? Don't cha wish your girlfriend was a freak like me? Don't cha...* – during which Xaba begins to dance slowly and sensually behind the screen

in a kind of burlesque striptease. During the dance Xaba pauses, in profile, at various intervals and can be seen to be doing *something* with her costume that is not connected to the dance and is not immediately apparent. After a while it becomes clear that this ambiguous action is Xaba blowing air into two compartments within her costume, one of which is positioned across her chest and the other across her bottom. As these compartments inflate during her seductive dance they begin to alter the silhouette of Xaba's shadow-body, adding to her body-image an enlarged posterior and voluminous breasts which, when viewed in profile, create an image of a body-shape reminiscent of archival depictions of Baartman's body (Figure 6).

The image, I suggest, is dialectical, in Benjaminian terms, and emerges as a 'shock' to the beholder through its sudden collision of the past into the present. Within an atmosphere scored by contemporary sound (with jarringly appropriate lyrics) and framed by the present moment of the performance event, the image of Baartman's past body, dancing audaciously close to, alongside, and near Xaba's own dancing body is unsettling. Although the two bodies become composite in their representation through shadow, with one overlaid on the other, Xaba's careful framing of the moving image, I would argue, counters a complete conflation of the two bodies, even though, visually, they appear to be one. The audience see the gradual transformation of Xaba's shadow-body, and Xaba does not hide her manual inflating of the costume so that, although theatrical and spectacular in its aesthetic and ingenuity, the magic of the transformation is somewhat reduced by revealing its mechanics.



Figure 6: Nelisiwe Xaba in *They look at me and that's all they think*. Photographer: Val Adamson

Similarly, Xaba's treatment and positioning of her body from the onset of the work – as an object overlaid by other objects – helps to frame this image for the audience as another instance of this object-on-object relationality. In this moment, Xaba's body and Baartman's body come about as close to touching as two bodies existing in different temporalities can, but they do not touch – Xaba does not *become* Baartman and the virtual traces of Baartman's body do not actualise through Xaba's anatomy. The interval between their touching does, however, intensify as the close proximity between the two bodies initiates an ecology that is palpably liminal – neither clearly past nor present, neither representation nor becoming, neither Xaba nor Baartman. In a way, Xaba folds time in this moment, choreographically, to bring two distinct and different bodies significantly closer together.

The ecology created through these three encounters of reaching-toward Baartman is further complicated by the second layer of touching in the work, occurring between Xaba's body on the stage and those of the audience who look at her. Unlike the first layer, in this complementary reaching-towards, Xaba is not the active initiator of touch. Rather, she positions herself choreographically through the work as a body towards which she encourages the audience to reach. While the title of the work privileges the visual sense, the work itself as an assemblage of moving images, I suggest, can be seen to encourage a perceptive encounter that is less "optical-visual" and more "visceral-visual" (Fenemore, 2003:109-110). As already noted in Chapter Two, rather than engaging an optical-visual communication with an audience through "visual semiotics, textual interpretation, [and] metaphor" where "a spectator's role ... is normatively one of pleasure fulfilment" (2003:109), a visceral-visual encounter seeks to decentralise the role of looking and emerges from a shared, multisensory encounter where "the overriding perceptual means of engagement ... [is] one of social, spatial and temporal engagement" (2003:110).

They look at me is a visually evocative work, and through her encounters with the various objects, Xaba also encourages a distinctly visceral experience of the work. As moving images, each encounter with Xaba's body elicits a palpable tactility that extends beyond her own physical experience of touch to create visceral and affective sensations of motion and touching that can be experienced by the audience through their other senses, synaesthetically and somaesthetically. Through their ambiguity, many of Xaba's images are thus felt rather than understood, and this feeling or sensation, I suggest, elicits a corresponding desire to

touch. I do not infer here that the audience are encouraged by Xaba to physically touch her, but rather that the ecology of the work itself, as a sense-event, manifests a relationship with the viewer that is more akin to touch, or the *potential* to touch, than to a distanced, objective looking.

However, just as Baartman's body is untouchable in relation to Xaba's reaching-toward, in a similar way Xaba's body is untouchable to the audience. This is augmented in the final moments of the work when Xaba returns the gaze of the audience for the first time. Wrapped up, protected and confined in a tube of bubble-wrap, her body is obscured (again), made invisible and rendered unavailable to touch. Xaba's hurt facial expression implies that an oppression and a violence has been enacted upon her. Whereas Xaba arguably succeeds in her reaching-toward Baartman, the audience's reaching-toward Xaba, I suggest, is halted by this final image. Xaba's behaviour and countenance responds to their desire to touch with another kind of gesture – a halt, a stop, a counter-gesture that signifies that she no longer wishes to participate in this act of reaching-toward.

Sakhozi says NON to the Venus

Xaba's second instalment in *The Venus* approaches the gesture of reaching (back) towards Baartman in a notably different way. Unlike *They look at me*, *Sakhozi* bears an unequivocal relation and connection to Baartman and her story. This is acknowledged in the title through the citing of Baartman via her stage name. There is an irony, however, in Xaba's naming of this work because, in a departure from her strategy in *They look at me*, as the performance unfolds Baartman's body and story do not materialise as actual representations despite the clear identification articulated in the title. Baartman, instead, remains a spectre in the work – a presence that Xaba reaches toward and which can, at times, be felt, but which does not appear, visually, in the work. The title, in this instance, serves to summon the archive of Baartman as a memory and a ghost, which then facilitates a perceiving of the work by the audience through this layer of memory.

Xaba's title thus alludes to a temporal blurring occurring in the work, or as Burt (2009:447) describes, dance's unique ability to make time both "visible" and "sensible" by merging the past and present through the performance of memory. This temporal blurring in the title manifests through the naming of the two subjects, one of which says 'no' (in French)

to the other. While 'the Venus' in the title refers most obviously to Baartman, 'Sakhozi' refers, phonetically, to former French president (between 2007 and 2012) Nicolas Sarkozy. As Coly notes, Sarkozy was "a champion of anti-immigration laws mostly geared toward keeping African bodies out of France" (2019:1). From this historical context one can surmise that Sarkozy's 'no' (as spoken to the Venus) relates to a denial of the right to enter into or remain in the territory of France. The title thus conflates a (then) contemporary political situation regarding African immigration with the historical experience of Baartman, who was taken to France through colonial oppression and who is, two centuries later, being told that she and her progeny must leave, and should not return.

Xaba's connecting of these two situations, time periods and bodies in the title thus hints at and surfaces a genealogical, "historically contingent" (Anaïs, 2013:134) geopolitics surrounding the complex relationality between the movements of those bodies originating from Africa and those from the colonising European continent. This politics of movement is further augmented by the specific context in which the work was originally created. As Coly (2019) notes, the work was first performed in France at the *Musée du Quai Branly* – a museum that has, since 2006, housed the ethnographic collections of the *Musée de l'Homme* (the museum which had previously held the remains of Baartman). Xaba was invited to create a work for performance at the museum as part of a larger series, along the theme of 'The Body in Movement.'

Xaba's framing of her body in *Sakhozi* is thus closely aligned with movement and action. Although her body still engages with an array of other material objects, the positioning of her body in relation to these is differentiated by a markedly stronger sense of agency. The objects in *Sakhozi* do not overtly obstruct nor obscure her body and, as such, her actual body is, comparatively, more visible. Xaba's relationship with the audience is also typified by a stronger sense of agency and an overt awareness, coupled with a subtle sense of distrust or suspicion of the presence of those who observe the performance. When the audience enter the performance space, for example, Xaba is again already involved in a task – the careful construction of a barrier or demarcation between herself and the audience in the form of paper cut-outs in the shape of bones, which she neatly arranges on the perimeter of her performance space. At times Xaba pauses briefly from this task and stares rigidly at individual audience members as they enter the room. Whereas *They look at me* presents Xaba's body as

an object that *can* resist (to refer back to Moten), in *Sakhozi*, I would argue that Xaba's body is more indicative of one that, from the beginning, *does* resist.

Choreographically the work places much more emphasis on the gestures and actions of Xaba's actual body, and as such, her body really *moves* in *Sakhozi* in ways that extend beyond movement resulting from an encounter with an object. Although Xaba uses objects, these are less centralised as activators of action and serve instead to hold and frame the movement of the body in a supportive, or complementary, relationship. Having evoked a memory of Baartman through the title, Xaba positions her various gestures and actions in relation to this memory and, through these physical expressions, initiates a reaching (back) toward Baartman's body.

Xaba's reaching (back) towards Baartman occurs, predominantly, through the (re)enacting of actions through the body understood as an archive of gestural traces, where Xaba's actions in the present seem to hold a genealogical connection to Baartman. Xaba invokes in this an understanding of the 'body-image' akin to that of Austrian psychoanalyst Paul Schilder:

One's body-image extends itself to any place any particle of one's body has reached across space and time [...]. Wherever one has left a particle of one's body (feces, blood, menstruation, urine, sweat, tears, semen) there one finds the limits of one's body-image. Wherever one has left an imprint of one's body (including linguistic ones, affective ones, sensorial ones) there is a limit of one's body-image. (in Lepecki, 2006:50)

From this perspective, the limits of Baartman's body-image stretch significantly far to include a multiplicity of other bodies situated between France and South Africa over two centuries. Xaba's task of laying down a perimeter of bones, in this sense, becomes notably symbolic as a means for Xaba to create a performance space that is simultaneously an extension of Baartman's body-image through a symbolic re-enacting of the repatriation of her remains or as a means to clearly mark out and delineate a small cage-like territory that symbolically locates the extension of Baartman's virtual (or spectral) presence.⁷⁷ Within this space, Xaba's actions, observed by the audience through the layer of memory, emphasise the presence of

⁷⁷ Xaba's laying of the bones in this context also re-emphasises the continued presence of Baartman's body-image in France, through her residual imprint, even after her actual remains had been returned.

Baartman's virtual imprint within each act and frame Xaba's actions as an extension of Baartman's body-image even though, visually, their bodies differ significantly.

There are three particular moments towards the end of the work where, I suggest, Xaba's reaching toward the spectre of Baartman (through reiterative gesture) becomes particularly palpable and surfaces some of the complexities relating to the movement of the African female body and its spectral haunting. The first of these involves Xaba's re-enacting of a ritual of repetitive gestures. After removing her long pleated skirt and placing it on the floor, Xaba kneels down, facing the audience, and sits for a short while as her eyes nervously dart from left to right, as though she is unsure of what to do next. Xaba then leans forward into a prayer-like position and places her forehead on the ground. A piece of cloth is then removed from her nearby suitcase which has an enlarged image of a South African passport printed onto it. She places the cloth on the floor in front of her and again places her forehead on the ground. Xaba removes a small bottle containing white powder from the suitcase which she pours, first into her hands and then onto the cloth. Again, she places her forehead onto the ground. Xaba then marks her face with the white powder, pours more powder onto the cloth, and places her forehead on the ground. This series of actions is repeated two more times as Xaba marks each arm in powder before the cloth is folded into a bundle, tied with a piece of string and placed back into her suitcase.

The ritual is unequivocally ambiguous. It is not made explicitly clear to the audience what the ritual is for or what Xaba intends to achieve by marking her body and passport in the white powder. This ambiguity is also heightened by Xaba's demeanour before beginning the ritual, as she sits nervously on the floor as though unsure of whether or not to proceed. As an action, however, this ritual is particularly poignant when considered through the lens of reiterative gesture. Ritual theorist, Catherine Bell (1992:147), defines ritual as a series of embodied actions and gestures that are seen to connect to traditions and knowledges from a distant past. As embodied actions, rituals are thus largely reiterative – enacted and re-enacted by different bodies over (often vast) periods of time. In performing these particular actions in a repetitive and ritualistic way, within a space symbolically demarcated by the bones of Baartman, Xaba frames these actions as having a connection, in some unspecified way, with Baartman's spectre.

Following this ritual, Xaba, clothed in a black, fish-net body stocking, stands and faces the audience and begins to dance. Her dance is a mix of local South African vocabularies and she moves swiftly from one movement motif to the next, never lingering for too long in one particular action. Throughout the dance, however, Xaba undercuts the movement of the body with a markedly economic use of physical energy and a facial expression that shifts from disinterest or boredom (at the start of the dance) to sadness (at its end). Like the ritual preceding it, Xaba's enacting of the dance is framed in ambiguity. Her low-energy execution of the movements and emotive facial expressions cloud the dance within an atmosphere of oppression – as though Xaba has been forced, by someone or some unseen force, to dance for the audience, against her will.

In the final moment of the work, Xaba removes a white apron from her suitcase as well as two other pieces of cloth, all of which are imprinted with an enlarged image of the travel visa permitting Xaba to perform in France. She ties the apron around her waist and one of the clothes over her head as a *doek*,⁷⁸ thus transforming into an image that is an amalgam of a South African domestic worker and a French Chamber maid. With the remaining cloth Xaba, on hands and knees, begins to clean up after herself, wiping up the powder from the floor and dusting the ground by flicking the cloth against it. These actions of cleaning gradually morph in their intention, moving from a kind of dusting to a violent striking of the ground, of the air around her, of the bones on the floor and of her own body, as though chasing Baartman's (and any other) residual spectres out of the performance space. As the work concludes, Xaba glares at the audience, spits at them and leaves.

Within each of these moments Xaba's (re)enacting of action and gesture can be considered, through the perspective of touch, as an internally corporeal reaching (back) towards Baartman as a virtual imprint within these actions. Coly, in her analysis of *Sakhozi*, describes Xaba's reaching toward the spectre of Baartman as a kind of "postcolonial hauntology", where a body in the present "seeks guidance from specters in order to read the present" (2019:6). In her book, *Postcolonial hauntologies* (2019), Coly draws from Derrida's (1994) concept of hauntology (as expressed in *The Specters of Marx*) as well as Avery Gordon's development of this in *Ghostly matters* (2008), as a means to reveal the ways in which the

⁷⁸ A *doek* is a square piece of cloth or fabric that is tied around the head as a means to cover the head and hair.

African female body, in a postcolonial present, continues to be haunted by colonial spectres. After Derrida and Gordon, Coly conceptualises postcolonial hauntology as the “chronic inability to break away from the colonial scene or think oneself outside of the colonial” and thus “a mechanism that repeatedly chains postcolonial subjectivities back to the colonial scene” (2019:14).

In this conception, the spectres which haunt the African female body, Coly argues, are the residual, sometimes invisible, traces of antiquated colonial thought which mark the African female body as “grotesque and hypersexual” (2019:2) and which continue to ghost current, postcolonial thinking about the female body. In *Sakhozi*, however, Coly suggests that Xaba’s performance as a postcolonial hauntology becomes “an enabling and emancipatory epistemology” (2019:7) because in reaching toward Baartman’s spectre (through movement), Xaba surfaces the “afterlife” of these spectral colonial discourses and, more so, reveals their continued, and very real, presence in how bodies move.

It is thus significant, in the three moments described above, that Xaba uses reiterative actions and gestures to reach towards Baartman that are simultaneously haunted by the spectres of colonial discourses that continue to “govern the movement of bodies” (2019:5) and, in particular, the African female body. In trying to touch Baartman’s spectre through shared, common gesture, Xaba arguably enacts, in these three moments, the only movements that grant her (and Baartman) access to France – by performing her body’s exoticness (through ritual and dance), her body’s hypersexuality (through dance) or her body’s labour (through domestic work). Through these actions, Coly suggests, “Xaba overlays her own story as a twenty-first-century woman only allowed in Sarkozy’s France because she is an exotic and sexualized black female body with Sarah Baartman’s itinerary from South Africa to France” (2019:2). The ambiguity that shrouds each of these moments further complicates Xaba’s reaching toward Baartman, as she seems to perform, in each moment, her unwillingness and discomfort in connecting to Baartman’s memory and ghost through these *particular* actions which “highlight the racialized and gendered structures that regulate the movements of African bodies” (2019:3).

Unlike *They look at me*, Xaba’s choreographic reaching-toward Baartman in *Sakhozi* maintains a considerable amount of distance between them. Xaba evokes the virtual presence

of Baartman, through memory and movement, but the interval between them remains wide. Baartman's traces do not actualise and her presence in the work is one that is inferred rather than visually manifested or experientially felt. Xaba's reaching out to touch Baartman in *Sakhozi* is thus less about establishing a palpable connection with Baartman's body within the performance event itself than it is with surfacing the temporal, and remaining, complexities of geopolitical injustices through a blurring of the past and present – where something enacted on a body in the past, is also enacted onto bodies in the present and, as Coly contends, suggests “the possibility of a return to the past in the future” (2019:2). Sarkozy's ‘no’ is, in this sense, not a new violence enacted towards contemporary African bodies, but a re-manifesting of a residual spectral trace which continues to haunt both past and present, as well as future, bodies.

Xaba thus creates a very different kind of ecology in *Sakhozi*. While Xaba's reaching (back) toward Baartman is complemented by a concurrent reaching-toward with the audience in *They look at me*, in *Sakhozi*, I would posit that this secondary layer, which serves to invite the beholder into the ecology, is not actively initiated. Instead, Xaba engages an altogether different minor gesture – she holds her ground and pushes back. While those who watch Xaba might desire to reach-towards her, Xaba's often combative demeanour and ambiguously framed actions in the work counter the establishment of a significant visceral connection. For the audience, the experience of *Sakhozi* is distinctly dissimilar from *They look at me*. The individual works, through Xaba's divergent choreographic strategies, create two different kinds of ecologies: one in which the audience share and sensorially participate, and another where a connection through the body is hindered. Both encounters thus emerge from a common reaching-toward the figure of Baartman, facilitated through Xaba's body. This results in opposing experiences which each surface, and hint in their separation and their relation to each other, at other possibilities concerning bodies and what they can and cannot *do*.

The possibilities in ecologies

In each of the ecologies that Xaba creates there is thus a distinct experience and manifesting of change. This change is not something that Xaba represents for the audience, but an experience that is expressed through the body's activation in the interval of the sense-event itself. While a critiquing of “epidermalisation” and a re-imagining of a “postcolonial matri-

archive" (Piccirillo, 2014:1,8) are certainly activisms that Xaba's works engage, I suggest that there is also an epistemological disruption that runs alongside, or underneath, these activations which her works surface through a tacit experiencing of time through the event and the specific ecologies that the minor gesture initiates. In each encounter with Baartman and Xaba's body-archives there is an implicit experience of change that relates to what bodies *do* and *can do*. *They look at me* draws multiple bodies together, bringing them almost to the brink of touch in a closeness that is, until the very end of the work, collectively felt and shared. *Sakhozi*, conversely, holds bodies apart, maintains distances and hinders the formation of a collective sharing of this connection beyond the scope of the individual. While acknowledging the connecting potential of bodily and gestural virtualities, *Sakhozi* simultaneously surfaces the continued colonial haunting of these virtualities. Within these ecologies, the bodies of those who witness, experience and participate in Xaba's enacting of a minor gesture, undergo their own form of corporeal change, where memory, expectation, assumption, belief and behaviour are opened to minor shifts and transformations which have the potential to initiate minoritarian acts of self-reflection and re-assessment.

Amid these two ecologies another field of possibilities is also opened in the interval of difference between the two opposite but complementary performance encounters. Each ecology, in a way, presents the audience with a possibility of what bodies can do. In the gap between these two experiences of change, Xaba opens a multiplicity of (other) possibilities existing between these two felt moments, of a "politics-yet-to-come" (Burt, 2009:465) or, what Manning has called, "an impossible politics" (Manning, 2007:115). This alternate, imagined futurity of being-in-the-world and being-with-other-bodies, although not clearly stated or defined, is (like time) rendered palpable and sensible in its not-yet-taking-form.

As a strategy, reaching (back) towards bodies in the past through the body-as-archive thus emerges as a notably anarchival choreographic act. By positioning the body as a territory composed and comprised of a multiplicity of other bodies and virtualities, across time and space, the act of reaching out to touch manifests an intentionality that becomes a line of flight. Through this intentionality virtualities and traces of past bodies are able to dialogue with the body in the present through dynamic processes of recomposition, to produce, release, point to and (sometimes) actualise new territories and new possibilities for being a body, being-in-the-world.

Chapter consolidation

Part 1 of this chapter offered an explication of the body-as-archive's capacity to store traces of memory and embodied experience as well as its associated ability to both passively absorb (as flaneur) and actively seek out (as ragpicker) virtual traces. I then examined the various micropractices involved in creating the performance work *Sacre for one* where the incorporation of past dances as embodied traces into the body of the performer was framed as an anarchival engagement with the body, where traces of past actions could be seen to re-compose and re-actualise differently through their embodied intermingling. I offered Manning's understanding of touch, as an active intentionality of reaching-toward another body, as a theoretical framework through which to reconsider the ways in which present bodies might initiate a questioning and re-connecting with past bodies through movement.

In Part 2 the act of reaching (back) toward was proposed as an anarchival strategy for the disruption of knowledge and a means to explore alternative epistemologies through its understanding as a minor gesture (after Manning) and its ability to create ecologies. This proposal was then developed through a critical re-looking at Xaba's *The Venus* through the lens of touch and the minor gesture and, in particular, at the specific choreographic ways in which Xaba reaches (back) toward the body, spectre and memory of Baartman as a means to critically interrogate the relationality between past and present and alternative possible futurities. In the final chapter of this thesis I will extend this exploration of the ghost or spectre, introduced here, within anarchival research by considering how the virtual traces of the dead, haunting both archival objects and archival bodies, might be engaged with as sources for anarchival investigation.

CHAPTER FIVE: GHOSTS

Introduction

In this final chapter, the ghost is positioned as a source for anarchival questioning. The focus on the ghost emerges from the previous two research processes and thus explores the ghost as a virtual trace that can be seen to haunt the present moment, after Derrida and Gordon, through its virtual presence within both archival objects and bodies. Whereas the previous chapter considered the spectres of Baartman and colonial discourses as postcolonial hauntologies surrounding the black female body, the consideration of the ghost in this research process is conceived more in line with Mbembe's acknowledgement of archival spectres (as discussed in Chapter One), which result from the colonial archive's "trade with death" (2002:22). For Mbembe, these spectral traces are something that the Western document-biased archive seeks to control through a ritual-like process of entombment and burial, but which, he observes, continue to linger within the archive in trace form.

In Part 1 of this chapter, repertoire in the form of dances and embodied rituals that engage directly with the dead are considered as initiators for micropractice. By reflecting and thinking-through the processes of creating the work *Ghostdance for one*, dance and ritual are interrogated as sites for embodied knowing, where traces of the dead can be actualised differently and thus initiate alternative thinking. Part 2 extends this premise by considering the performance of effigy as a particular approach to engaging with the dead that can be seen to have anarchival potential. The specificities of this potential, in relation to the disruption of archival knowledge, is evidenced through analyses of three works by Gavin Krastin, Sello Pesa and Igshaan Adams – all of which, I suggest, engage creatively and disruptively with ritual as a means to encounter the ghosts of the dead.

PART 1: THE GHOST AS ANARCHIVAL SOURCE

Ghostdance for one was developed over a period of four months in 2016/early 2017 and was performed on two separate occasions. It was first presented in February 2017 as a single performance at the ICA Live Art Festival in Cape Town. A developed version of the work was

presented again in July of the same year at the National Arts Festival in Makhanda. This second iteration was installed in the Nun's Chapel, a deconsecrated church on the campus of Rhodes University, and was performed five times over a period of five days.

As with previous micropractices, the choreographic problem at the root of this practical research concerns the role of the ghost as a potential line of flight for anarchival exploration. Mbembe acknowledges this potential of archival ghosts and attributes to them an agency and an ability to initiate change. He suggests:

There will always remain traces of the deceased [...]. The function of the archive is to thwart the dispersion of these traces and the possibility, always there, that left to themselves, they might eventually acquire a life of their own. Fundamentally, the dead should be formally prohibited from stirring up disorder in the present. (Mbembe, 2002:22)

Similarly, Mbembe's understanding of archiving as "a kind of interment" and a means "to consign elements of that life which could not be destroyed" (2002:22) reiterates the distancing of the archive from the performatic (Taylor, 2003:6), and by association, the privileging of colonial epistemologies over the body and its ability to both produce and pass down knowledge and memory. Despite this, Mbembe argues, the ghosts of those entombed bodies and knowledges retain a capacity to elicit change and thus 'stir up disorder' in the future.

In *Ghostly matters*, Gordon similarly recognises the unique potential of ghosts to initiate change and alterity. She suggests: "[S]pecters or ghosts appear when the trouble they represent and symptomize is no longer being contained or repressed or blocked from view" (2008:xvi). These ghosts, "pregnant with unfulfilled possibility" (2008:183), Gordon argues, are alive in the sense that, although virtual, they are in relation to us and have their own desires and designs. "If you let it", Gordon contends, "the ghost can lead you toward what has been missing" (2008:57) and can "radically change how we know and what we know" (2008:27).

Alongside the archive's interment of the dead and their ghosts, Roach observes a similar occurrence in post-Industrial European cultures in relation to the treatment of the dead. Roach argues, "Europeans attempted to impose on themselves (and on the people's they colonised) a revolutionary spatial paradigm: the segregation of the dead from the living" (1996:48). He attributes this "segregation" to modernity, and notes a shift in the relationship

with the dead coinciding with the emergence of early industrialisation in Europe, where “a new way of handling (and thinking about) the dead” (1996:48) emerged. This segregation was both literal and symbolic and was typified by “that characteristic invention of modern architecture ... cemeteries” (1996:48). Roach suggests that prior to modernity, European traditions, much like African and Asian traditions, regarded the dead as omnipresent in spirit form and materially present in churchyard burial grounds and crypts which often overflowed into those spaces inhabited by the living. With the ‘invention’ of the cemetery as a designated space for the dead, originally located outside of city parameters, Roach observes a shift in the relationship with the dead where memory of the dead is removed from the immediate spaces of the living and contained instead in designated, artificial sites such as cemeteries, monuments and archives.

Through this segregation the presence and influence of the dead on the living becomes something that can be regulated and controlled through a spatial politics. Cemeteries, like archives, thus become (after Pierre Nora) “places of memory” (Roach, 1996:26), reserved for the remembrance and visitation of the dead by the living in ways that are regulated in terms of behaviour (what one does in a cemetery), space (where one goes to be with the dead) and time (when one is able to be with the dead). Places of memory, as Roach argues, essentially serve to replace “environments of memory” (1996:26), which acknowledge the constant presence of the dead in the oral and corporeal behaviour of the living, and limit the effect the dead can have on the living.⁷⁹

Roach’s understanding of environments of memory resonates strongly with what Victor Ukaegbu describes as the “holistic interaction” of African cosmologies, where the living and the dead co-exist in an “integrated socio-sacral *communitas*” (2011:131) and where performative cultural activities, such as dance, performance and ritual, as forms of orature (wa Thiong’o, 1998), also assume significance as embodied ways in which to converse with, honour and memorialise one’s ancestors. In this way, the Western archive’s distancing of itself from the body and repertoire is concurrently an epistemological distancing of the bodies of

⁷⁹ Roach’s distinguishing between places and environments of memory draws from Pierre Nora’s theorising of the *lieux de mémoire* and *milieux de mémoire* (Nora, 1997). While Nora’s understanding of ‘lieux’ extends beyond places (to also include events and objects) and is often translated as ‘sites of memory’ or ‘memory space’, Roach emphasises *place* through his translation and use of the term, where places are understood as spaces that have been assigned specific meaning.

the living from those of the dead in an attempt to “establish unquestionable authority” (Mbembe, 2002:22) over cultural memory and knowledge, creating a mechanism through which to manage what is remembered and what is forgotten. Additionally, this “segregation of the dead” (Roach, 1996:47) from the living can be seen as an attempt to further establish, and solidify, a hierarchical binary relationship between the present and the past as separate and distinct from each other, with an emphasis on the importance of the *now*, disconnected from a less important *then*.

Towards micropractice: dancing (with) the dead

As a means to engage with the choreographic problem of how these ghosts might be re-actualised through the body, the research process for *Ghostdance for one* began by identifying a variety of entry and/or departure points that might serve to initiate a series of micropractices. In identifying these beginnings, I looked to the past, predominantly through the archive, for instances where embodied performance, death and the ghost coalesced and where dance, specifically, functioned as a performative medium through which to engage the ghosts of the dead. These existing historical practices became departure points for an embodied exploration of the ghost.

In identifying these strata and departure points for micropractice I was particularly drawn to the realm of ritual practice as an instance where bodies and ghosts interact with each other. As noted in the previous chapter, Bell’s (1992) definition of ritual as an embodied practice that can be seen to connect to traditions and values located in a distant past, positions ritual as a notably hauntological space where embodied acts, in the present, reiterate and echo those of bodies in the past. This connection to the ghost is, arguably, augmented in funerary rituals of transformation and transition, what anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep (1960) has called ‘rites of passage’, where the body in the present undergoes change, through ritual practices, in order to transition into or connect with an otherworldly realm. In *The ritual process: structure and anti-structure* (1977), Victor Turner articulates three phases common to rituals that concern the passage or transition of human subjects from one state to another. Informed by Van Gennep’s observations in *The rites of passage* (1960), Turner describes these phases as “Separation”, “Margin or Liminal” and “Reaggregation or Reincorporation” (1977:94-95).

Through these ritual phases, Turner explains, the subject journeys towards transition, by first becoming separated “from an earlier fixed point in the social structure” through “symbolic behaviour” (1977:94). In the Margin or Liminal phase, Turner proposes, “the characteristics of the subject” become “ambiguous” (1977:94). Turner describes this ambiguity as arising from the ways in which the liminal subject may “elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space ... betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (1977:95). In the final phase, the subject’s passage is consummated and the now transitioned subject becomes incorporated into a new state. In rituals of death, this would entail the release of the deceased into another realm and the conclusion of their transitional journey from corpse to spiritual entity or ancestor.

In approaching micropractice for *Ghostdance for one*, this three-phased transitional journey was not something I actively sought to manifest or replicate in the work, but it was an aspect of the research that I was cognisant of and which inevitably informed each of the micropractices. I was aware, for instance, that an encounter with the ghost, through performance and micropractice, would likely necessitate a transitional journey of some kind – that ghosts cannot be readily and easily conjured and require a process of seeking connections and the considered creation of in-between, liminal relationalities.

Identifying strata – three dances with the dead

The first point of departure identified for micropractice was sourced from my own distant European heritage in the form of the *danse macabre* (dance of death), which emerged as one of the few instances I could find where dance was used, in a European historical context, as a vehicle for the expression of the dead. Originating in the late thirteenth-century in western Europe, the *danse macabre* began as a “moral ritual” (Cohen, 1982:35) performed by the victims of plague and war as a religious and moral reminder of the horrors of death and the “torments of hell in the afterlife” (1982:35). As John Cohen (1982) explains, the *danse macabre* typically entailed the anthropomorphic portrayal of Death as a human skeleton who would lead a group of dancers through the streets of villages and towns as a warning and reminder of the horrors of death and of hell, and thus the perils of sin.

During the emergence of modern dance in Germany in the 1920s and 30s, many *Ausdruckstanz* choreographers, caught between the atrocities of the First World War and the impending gloom of the Second World War, turned to death as a recurring theme in their search for a new, modern dance form and initiated a reinvention of the *danse macabre* in the twentieth-century. Works such as Mary Wigman's *Totentanz* (1926) and *Totenmal* (1929), Valeska Gert's, *Der Tod* (1929), and Kurt Jooss', *The Green Table* (1932), emerge as modern reengagements with the depiction of death through dance and the performing body. Kate Elswit (2009) argues that unlike the *danse macabre* of the thirteenth century where the performer, dressed as Death, functioned to remind onlookers of death's inevitability, the choreographers of German Expressionism "moved beyond allegory toward a visible manifestation of death and its impact on the labour of dancing bodies" (2009:78). Due to the expressionist desires of the German modern dancers, a visual representation or depiction of death was deemed insufficient, and instead they strove to find in themselves "the essential truth of their being" (Howe, 1996:214) and thus express through dance the very essence and universality of death, treading the boundary between "the actual kinaesthetic event and the impossibility of death" (Elswit, 2009:78). Elswit contends: "They embodied death not only referentially or virtually, but also as a tangible human event, thus moving beyond *The Dying Swan*'s sublimation to explore mortality as a condition of the human body" (2009:78-79). Through the modernist explorations of the *Ausdruckstanz* choreographers, the *danse macabre* developed from a physical depiction of death to a dance form concerned with the expression of death as an experiential, affective and sensory event inevitably encountered by every living body.

These two manifestations of the *danse macabre* became the departure points for a creative micropractice. In particular, I was interested in the specific ways in which each version of the dance presented an attempt to embody death, differently. While the original form approaches death through mimicry by dancing as-if a skeleton, many of the *Ausdruckstanz* choreographers approach death affectively, through the danced expression of death's physiological sensations as experienced by the body. As physical and performative practices associated with the dancing of death, both versions of the *danse macabre* constitute a useful territory from which to depart in the exploration of other, new ways in which a contemporary re-imagined dance of death might facilitate an encounter with the dead.

A second point of departure for micropractice was the work of South African choreographer Vincent Sekwati Mantsoe whose choreographic approach, particularly in his solo performances of the 1990s, is rooted in a delicate balancing of ritual and performance, where dance is framed as a way in which to connect and converse with his ancestors. Mantsoe, who calls himself a “traditionalist” (Vedel, 2007:94) working in contemporary styles, has been open and vocal about the interconnectedness of his choreographic practice and his cultural beliefs and practices concerning his ancestors and their presence in his life and in his work. His early solo works such as *Gula* (1993) and *Barena* (2000), which are created as theatre dance works and are predominantly performed in conventional theatre spaces, are held and supported by a network of cultural rituals associated with the dead and his ancestral heritage.⁸⁰

These rituals, which are performed by himself as well as his family at their ancestral home, reaffirm the close correlation between Mantsoe’s dancing and the ghosts of his predecessors and involve the thanking and honouring of the dead for their role in his performances (Vedel, 2007:94-95).⁸¹ Mantsoe describes a kind of “double consciousness” (in Vedel, 2007:97) that is engaged when he performs, where one part of his being is *elsewhere* in conversation with the ancestors through trance (induced by the dance), while another part of himself remains on stage, in real time, in order to perform the dance for the audience. He explains:

My consciousness has to know I’m on stage. I have to know my choreography – but part of my consciousness is still in the process of trance – where I can talk to the choreography and the spirits at the same time. My well being is separated into two worlds. (in Vedel, 2007:97)

Mantsoe’s understanding of the dancing body recognises the origins of his choreography as being connected to a genealogy of past traces and influences, nascent within his body. He describes this quality of the body as “personal legend” (in Barnes, 2004:33) where ‘legend’ in this instance refers to the legacy that each body is a part of and indebted to. Mantsoe’s

⁸⁰ As Vedel (2007) notes, Mantsoe comes from a family of female traditional healers (*sangomas*) where his grandmother, mother and two of his aunts practise traditional healing and divining. While Mantsoe is not a traditional healer, he has been brought up with, and continues to participate in, various traditional cultural rituals concerned with conversing with and honouring the ancestors.

⁸¹ These are detailed by Vedel (2007:94-95) and include an annual ceremony at his ancestral home, a ceremony at his home in France during performance seasons, the shaving of his head prior to performance and a physical meditation before going on stage.

“personal legend” affirms an understanding of the body that is inextricably linked to the dead through its inherited movements, gestures and behaviours, where the dancing body “is imbued with individual lived experiences and varied embodiments of dance knowledge” (Barnes, 2004:32). The use of ritual in and around Mantsoe’s work becomes a way in which to acknowledge the dead for their active role in his dancing and to ask for their “permission to borrow their movements and to call upon them in performance” (Vedel, 2007:94).

In asking for the permission of his ancestors to use their movements, Mantsoe reiterates the environment of memory, described earlier, as a foil to the segregationist relationship with the dead that colonialism and its archive sought to establish. In Mantsoe’s work, dance becomes a conduit for an embodied expression of the ghosts of the past through a body existing in a spatio-temporal present, and through him the voices of the dead are able to speak and be heard. He proposes, “It is not the choreographer’s voice, but the ancestral spirits’ voices that speak through me” (in Vedel, 2007:96).

Nigerian dance academic Gladys Ijoema Akunna writes extensively on the cultural positioning of dance in Africa and the diaspora where, in addition to having cultural value as an art form, she argues, dance holds an “elaborated function” (2015:40) and often “serves as an outlet to express joy, grief, love, and hate in diverse cultural contexts” (2015:45). Akunna notes how dance, in many African cultures and societies, becomes a vital part of various rituals concerned with both celebration and commemoration as well as with death and mourning, where “movement expressions, or dances, function symbolically, and as art, illuminate, articulate, and even affect cosmic harmony, bodily-integration, and healing” (2015:40). This close association between dance and cultural rituals associated with the dead is prominent in Mantsoe’s work.

Karen Vedel (2007:96) describes Mantsoe’s performances as “ritualizing” which she distinguishes from the performance of an actual ritual. Mantsoe does not necessarily perform recognisable cultural rituals in the dance, but does approach the performance, and the process of performing, as a ritualistic practice. In this sense, Mantsoe uses his double consciousness toward two intentions: to perform a danced expression for an audience and to manifest this performance through ritualistic communion with his ancestors. In this way, the performance itself, I suggest, does not become a voyeuristic display of cultural ritual, but

assumes the characteristics and features of a ritual in order to encourage a ritualistic experience of a theatrical performance.

An example of this would be the way in which Mantsoe performs, particularly in his solo works. In performing both *Gula* and *Barena*, Mantsoe is not overtly aware of the audience as he dances, and focuses his energy and attention inward, to what he is doing. The audience, I would argue, become witnesses or participants to an experience that Mantsoe is facilitating, rather than spectators to a display of physical virtuosity or technical skill as one might expect in a concert dance performance. Similarly, Mantsoe's intentions for the audience's experience of the work align more with a ritualistic encounter than with a theatrical event. Mantsoe works to create a common environment (or ecology) that is shared with the audience, what he calls "a process of *re-education* and 'healing'" (Vedel, 2007:94, italics in the original), rather than a unidirectional or instructive encounter where Mantsoe represents meaning or narrative through dance which the audience, as spectators, must interpret and read. As an ecology, this performative encounter through ritual, thus appeals to visceral-visual modes of perceiving and to understanding that is beyond the representational paradigm alone.

As a departure point for micropractice, Mantsoe's choreographic approach becomes a territory that is particularly unfamiliar to me and thus an important space from which to initiate anarchival exploration. As a white South African of colonial descent, brought up in a predominantly Catholic religious context, my inherited understanding of death, mourning and rituals concerned with the dead, are largely limited to the funerary rites of Roman Catholicism where dance, in any form, is not typically used as an appropriate means through which to connect with the dead. Similarly, my own upbringing reinforced a segregationist relationship with the dead and as such, I did not inherit any embodied cultural rituals or practices (aside from prayer) that are intended to facilitate communication with my ancestors. As a micropractice for experimentation, deterritorialisation and discovery, Mantsoe's approach of using ritualising performance through dance to facilitate communication with the traces of the dead thus necessitates the reimagining of my own rituals in order to submerge myself in this territory.

The third source identified for micropractice concerned a well-known invocation of the ghost through dance from the dance archive. In 1981, Japanese butoh dancer, Kazuo Ohno,

created and performed the solo butoh dance, *My Mother*. Like Ohno's seminal work, *Admiring La Argentina* (1977), *My Mother* represents an ideal instance where dance, the ghost and archive come together in a notably anarchival way. In *Admiring La Argentina*, Ohno dances the ghost of the famous Spanish Flamenco dancer Antonia Mercé, known by her stage name, La Argentina. As a younger man Ohno had watched La Argentina perform in Tokyo in 1929, a "memory image" (Franko, 2011b:107), which he then uses 50 years later to inform his own danced expression of this memory and his subsequent evocation of La Argentina four decades after her death.⁸²

Although Ohno wears female clothing with his skin painted white when performing the work, his performance of La Argentina is more a becoming than a mimicry or impersonation of her behaviour. Ohno dances his memory of watching her perform, and through this memory, creates a space in which the ghost of La Argentina can emerge through co-composition with his own body. Franko suggests that,

He does not so much dance La Argentina as he dances his gaze upon her in the time of memory. This memory is necessarily selective: his movement is not a pristine representation but encompasses the dancing gaze of the remembering subject. Put otherwise, *he sees in her a memory of himself seeing her or, better yet, an image of his perception of her as embodied in his actions in the present.* (2011b:109-110, emphasis in original)

As a form and performance philosophy,⁸³ butoh has roots in both traditional Japanese Noh and Kabuki theatre as well as the German Expressionism of the *Ausdruckstanz* choreographers of the 1930s⁸⁴ (Horton Fraleigh, 1999; Fraleigh, 2010; Fraleigh & Nakamura, 2006), where an abstract and essentialist expression of sensation and experience is favoured over mimetic representation.

Cull (2012a:107) has similarly acknowledged correlations between Tatsumi Hijikata's butoh dances and Deleuzian notions of becoming, where a desire to become *other* than the

⁸² It is important to acknowledge that *Admiring La Argentina*, as a full length work, concerns more than the evocation of La Argentina's ghost. As Fraleigh & Nakamura (2006:90) note, the full work is divided into two sections: *Self-Portrait* and *La Argentina*. The first section concerns the life cycle of Kazuo Ohno, whereas the second section entails Ohno's evocation of La Argentina's spirit.

⁸³ Sondra Fraleigh considers the question 'Is butoh a philosophy?' in chapter three of her book *Butoh: metamorphic dance and global alchemy* (2010). Her conclusion is that butoh is an "unfinished metaphysical philosophy of the dancing body" (2010:76). She describes butoh as a philosophy that is metamorphic and anti-utopian at its core, but "unfinished" because it continues to evolve, morph and change.

⁸⁴ Fraleigh & Nakamura (2006:20) note this lineage in the early modern dance training of Hijikata and Ohno who both studied with Eguchi Takaya in Japan, who had studied under Wigman from 1931-1933.

self through dance underpins Hijikata's engaging with other bodies and their affects, beyond the mere mimicry or imitation of movement.⁸⁵ In a similar manner to the ways in which *Ausdruckstanz* choreographers strove to dance the essence of death as a felt experience, Ohno's evocation of La Argentina's ghost emerges from an embodied, experiential body-memory of an encounter with her in the temporal past. In this way, the ghost of La Argentina and the trace of the event of her performance in the past, reside inside Ohno. In actualising this trace into physical form in the present, Ohno thus dances both himself and La Argentina. Yoshito Ohno, Kazuo Ohno's son, notes:

I'm never quite sure whether Kazuo is quietly possessing her spirit, or if Argentina herself has entered his body [...]. As they begin to merge and become as one, a metamorphosis takes place. Kazuo becomes Argentina. As a consequence of this metamorphosis the question arises: Who possesses whom? (in Franko, 2011b:118-119)

As such, Franko observes, *Admiring La Argentina* is significantly autobiographical because it commemorates "a personal perception that was also historical. Ohno's performance in the present held this image of La Argentina's performance up before our eyes: the immediate presence of his movements simultaneously recalled the past" (2011b:109). Franko articulates here the "complex temporality" of Ohno's dance with the dead, where "a living, breathing performance proceeding in time" doubles as "a seeking or replaying of images" (2011b:117) of a past time.

In a similar way, Ohno's *My Mother* presents an equally complex evocation of the ghost through the expression of those traces residing in the body and image-memories of the dancer. In *My Mother* Ohno dances the memory of his mother and in so doing creates a temporal space in which the ghost of his mother is manifested through the movement of his body in the present. The work, like *Admiring La Argentina*, is not concerned with creating the illusion of Ohno's mother. Ohno explains:

My intention in dressing as a woman onstage ... has never been to become a female impersonator, or to transform myself into a woman. Rather, I want to trace my life back to its most distant origins. More so than anything else, I long to return to where I have come from. (in Franko, 2011b:113)

⁸⁵ It is important to note here that Cull does not suggest that Hijikata (nor butoh as a form) intentionally engages with (or is inspired by) Deleuzian philosophy. Cull acknowledges that Hijikata's ideas regarding butoh dance as a non-mimetic becoming or 'the body that becomes' predate the first mention of becoming or becoming-animal in Deleuze (and Guattari's) writings on the topic. See Cull (2012a:106-107).

Ohno's dancing of his mother can therefore be seen to extend beyond the intention of resurrecting a past moment or the trace of a past life into the present and becomes an autobiographical and genealogical tracing of self and the origins of the self. Unlike Ohno's evocation of La Argentina, which emerges from the image-memory of a singular experiential event in time (Ohno's watching of La Argentina in 1929), in *My Mother* Ohno draws from a vast body knowledge of innumerable experiences and encounters, both those consciously remembered and those he cannot cognitively recall but which, arguably, might still exist as traces deep within his body memory. The performance of *My Mother* can thus be understood, I suggest, as a moment in present time where some of these traces, which stretch temporally from Ohno's conception in his mother's womb until her death in his early adulthood, take temporary form or find, for a brief moment, physical expression in the present.

Any intention to re-enact (in the archival sense) Ohno's *My Mother* is, arguably, an impossibility because the work itself requires the pre-existence of Ohno's experiences and genealogical body memories of his mother in order to take form. Similarly, Ohno's own dancing of his mother would inevitably change in each performance due to the importance placed on processes of becoming in butoh and in this work in particular. The audience observing butoh performance is not witnessing the performance and execution of pre-determined, carefully crafted steps, but rather the process, in the present, of the performer *doing* something, *going through* something, and *becoming* something. Sondra Fraleigh (2010) describes this transformative quality of butoh as a "morphology of the body" (2010:37) and an "alchemy in motion" (2010:41) where the performer undergoes constant metamorphosis and shape-shifting within continually changing materials and conditions. Fraleigh explains:

Like any living organism, the human body is constantly undergoing change, a dance of beginnings and arrivals: fading, falling, emerging, sleeping, waking, and walking. The whole of human life is morphology: a study of birth, death, and hope. The morphing body suggests the future and clings to it, etching cellular traces of the past, strangely sometimes, but with a possible second future. (2010:44)

The performance in this context emerges from the performer's process of *transforming*, not the result of the transformation. In attempting to re-enact a work like *My Mother*, it is

therefore only possible, I propose, to recreate aspects of the process that the performer-choreographer follows rather than the performance itself.⁸⁶

In engaging Ohno's *My Mother* as a departure point for micropractice it thus became necessary to reconceptualise the recreation of the work not as a re-enactment of Ohno's dancing of the ghost of his mother, as accessible to me on the surface level of digital recording, but rather as the dancing of my own mother's ghost, nascent in my body's memories, through a process guided by Ohno's work.

Thinking-through micropractice: reflecting on *Ghostdance for one*

Each of the above sources constituted individual micropractices in the creation of *Ghostdance for one* and required a conscious balancing of self in negotiation with the socio-cultural and historical foundations and characteristics of each particular territory. By this I mean that it became necessary to acknowledge that the identity and socio-cultural genealogy of the researcher was, in all three instances, alien and other to each territory, and that, in submerging myself within a particular stratum, the self of the researcher had to be decentred within the process without being ignored, forgotten about or nullified. It was also important that the experience of the work for an audience was not framed as being about *me* and thus limited to my personal encounters with the ghost, but where my self becomes one of many entry points into the experience of the work for the audience.

While the embodied micropractices in this process constitute a personal, body-centred approach in line with those explored in *Detritus for one* and *Sacre for one*, *Ghostdance for one*, unlike the previous works, also includes other elements which emerged through collaboration and dialogue with other bodies and other artists. In this way, the self of the researcher-performer is also in conversation with the selves of other collaborating artists in other forms and artistic disciplines. Performance artist and scenographer, Gavin Krastin, contributed to the work in terms of its visual aesthetic as well as in a dramaturgical role. Composer, Shaun

⁸⁶ In 2016, Japanese performance artist, Takao Kawaguchi, presented the archival performance project, *About Kazuo Ohno – reliving the butoh diva's masterpieces*, in which he learned and performed moments from three of Ohno's well-known solo dances, including *My Mother*. Kawaguchi relies solely on archival video recordings of Ohno's works and tries "to reproduce, gesture for gesture, expression for expression, several of the master's performances as captured on video" (Burke, 2016). Siobhan Burke (2016) notes that Kawaguchi's project caused controversy because of its engagement with only the surface layer of Ohno's work rather than its inner workings and processes.

Acker, created an original score for the work and digital artist and academic, Rat Western, created a film that plays throughout the duration of the performance. The space in which the embodied micropractices unfold, during performance, is thus one in which multidisciplinary conversation and multisensory stimulation occurs. The work presents a real-time conversation between the living bodies of the performer and the audience, the ghosts of the dead, light, darkness, digital image, sound and visual aesthetic. In sharing the work with an audience, the performer goes through each of the following three micropractices, which are interconnected and combined through the structure of the performed work to create an anarchic and ritualising sharing of process with an audience.

Micropractice one: reimagining the danse macabre

In reimagining the *danse macabre*, the two historical versions of the dance (as discussed earlier) coalesce into an embodied exploration of a danced expression of death approached through both mimicry and the embodiment of affective sensation. Two characteristics of the dance thus constitute the territory from which to depart, namely: the assuming of the guise of death as represented by the human skeleton and the expression of death as a series of visceral sensations that the body experiences.

In trying to find, in my own body, what this other expression of a *danse macabre* might be, the process began through improvisation, often while wearing a mask of a skeleton. The mask was used as a tool to try and depersonalise myself, by covering the face, and to augment an awareness of the entire body in the embodiment of qualities such as bone and fleshlessness. The use of the mask in this instance resonates with Jacques Lecoq's neutral mask, which he used as "a tool to distance the actor from a false naturalism, allowing them to explore the grotesque or the real" (Roy, 2016:8). Parallel to this embodied exploration of the body being comprised only by bone, I also experimented with other corporeal sensations related to death and dying, such as muscle spasm, increasing or decreasing heartbeat, the emptying of the lungs and varying degrees of rigor mortis forming in specific parts of the body.

Early in this micropractice sound, in particular, surfaced as an evocative somatosensory source for physical expression and constituted a dominant role in the reimagining of the *danse macabre*. The physical sensation I recall most vividly from my own mother's passing was the sound she made just before she died and the physical sensation the

sound elicited in my own body. The sound was wet and phlegmy but also heavy and hard, like a book being dropped from a low height. Commonly referred to as the 'death rattle', the sound results from the accumulation of bodily fluids such as saliva and mucous in the throat and chest in the final stages of dying. In the micropractice I experimented with the translation of various corporeal death-related sounds into rhythms, dynamics and qualities of movement. These included irregular heartbeat patterns, the death rattle and laboured/strained breathing. These sonic sources were also shared with composer, Shaun Acker, as departure points for the creation of the aural score.

The dance that began to emerge through this process is characterised by the isolation of body parts and gyration, particularly of the chest, rib-cage, neck and head and the pelvis, moving in relation to each other through both organic and inorganic pathways. The quality of the body's musculature is imagined as sometimes fluid, mercurial and phlegmatic (in both senses of the word: phlegm-like and stoically calm) and sometimes rigidly hard and bone-like. Strangely, the sensation of this way of moving resonated in my body memory with the way I might dance in a nightclub. This nightclub *feel* was also reflected in the score composed by Acker, which had translated fluctuating heart beat patterns into tonal pulses subtly reminiscent of electronic dance club music. The allusion to nightclub dancing seemed oddly appropriate and an interesting evocation of death through dancing that hinted at the macabre as well as the uncanny. These qualities were then explored in two spatial configurations – as a stationary expression on top of a raised platform, where the focus is placed on the articulation of the body in relation to its parts, and as a march through space, where the body moves backwards and the focus is placed on the spatial trajectory of dynamic qualities. In both instances, this reimagined *danse macabre* is not a rigidly choreographed sequence of pre-planned movements and gestures but rather the manifesting of particular qualities and sensations in that moment.

In the performance of *Ghostdance for one* the *danse macabre* emerges as a danced expression of death that frames and holds the performance event, occurring at the beginning and end of the work. As the audience enter the performance space, the performer (me), in skeleton mask and a black hood, stands on top of a platform constructed of loose wooden beams, painted white, of varying lengths. Directly across from the platform, hangs a screen with the projected image of the performer's face (recorded at another time in the past), with

eyes closed. The audience enter the performance space from behind the performer and are seated on either side of the performance space, like a runway. Once the audience is seated, the performer slowly begins to dance the *danse macabre*. Sometimes the dance begins in the hips and pelvis, sometimes in the head and neck or the hands. Small isolations build into larger gyrations of body parts in pathways that shift constantly and in unpredictable directions. Over a period of roughly five minutes the dance builds and recedes in energy, speed, and complexity, eventually building to a frenzy of small and large spasms and gyrations of different parts before returning to stillness.

The dance, as the beginning moment of the performed work, resonates with Turner's understanding of the Separation phase in rituals of transition by alluding to a sense of detachment "from an earlier fixed point in the social structure" (1977:94). There is a distinct ambiguity in the performance of this first encounter because the performer does not perform as himself. As the audience enter the room, the projected face of the performer is visible but the face of the live performer is obscured by a mask. The opening image of a body staring across a room towards its own ghost becomes, I suggest, a visual manifestation of the separation and detachment between the performer and his social self, but it is unclear which performer is the ghost and which is the live.

One reviewer of the work, Kayleigh Damita (2017), alludes to this ambiguity in her description of her entrance into the performance space: "Dim lights enfold the space in intimacy. Alan Parker's face is projected onto a screen with his eyes shut. He could be asleep. He could be praying. Or he could be dead." This separation is extended as the performer begins to dance in a manner that is, arguably, not an expected way for a skeleton or death image to move. The movement of the *danse macabre* emphasises musculature and flesh and, as the dance increases in speed, the breath and effort of the body become audible. One could argue that these are characteristics or attributes concerned more with the living than with the dead. In this sense, the performer in the guise of death, dances with visible life and thus complicates the dichotomous relationship between the live dead body and its digital, seemingly dead projection.

A different manifestation of the *danse macabre* occurs again at the end of the work. Starting beneath the screen at the far end of the performance space, the hooded skeleton

figure slowly dances backwards, away from the screen and toward the exit. This manifestation of the dance begins as a slow-paced stepping, reminiscent of a New Orleans funeral march (or jazz funeral) but progressively assumes similar qualities and dynamics of the first iteration of the dance as the performer approaches the exit.⁸⁷ Again, the gyration of the hips, chest, shoulders and arms dominate as movement qualities begin assuming carnivalesque and celebratory connotations. At this point the score changes to a New Orleans jazz tune and the hooded skeleton figure dances until he has left the room, ‘cutting loose’ from the living, leaving the audience behind.

As Roach (1996:61-62) explains, the term “cutting the body loose” refers to “the moment of transformation” in traditional jazz funerals when the body of the deceased parts ways with the procession parade and enters the gates of the cemetery. This moment, he notes, is usually typified by “a burst of joyous music, dance and humour” (1996:62). The backwards march of the performer, out of the room, can be understood as a similar parting of ways, where the body of the ghost-like performer symbolically moves on, beyond the reality of the performance space, although there is no sudden burst of joyous music and dance that follows, only silence. The moment, I suggest, also resonates with Turner’s final phase, the Reaggregation or Reincorporation phase. In rituals of death, this phase typically entails the release of the deceased into another realm and the conclusion or consummation of their transitional journey from corpse to ancestor. The moment, however, like the first iteration of the *danse macabre* at the beginning, is shrouded in ambiguity. For the audience, it is unclear if a transformation or transition has taken place and, if it has, the exact nature of this transition. This ambiguity is augmented further by a mirroring of the dance that occurs on the screen. As the performer dances backwards out of the room, there is a similar backward dance performed by the digital performer, also in skeleton mask, visible on the screen. The two ghostly figures, one tangibly present and the other only virtually there, cut loose from each other, dancing away in opposite directions. These dual exits by the performer through the *danse macabre* signal an ending and a cutting loose of *something*, but this something is not stated directly and, in a way, the performance ends in the same way in which it began, with

⁸⁷ Judith Rothschild (2007:123) describes the New Orleans jazz funeral as a “variant of the Dance of Death”. While it is not technically a *danse macabre*, the danced nature of the parade march and its public procession led by the corpse of the deceased, create parallels between the thirteenth century original and this early nineteenth century tradition.

two personified images of the dead, who dance together in the same space and time while simultaneously existing in two different spaces and in different times.

While the reimagined *danse macabre* does not, in and of itself, facilitate the actualising of any of the specific ghosts conjured in the work it does serve a complementary function. Firstly, through its corporeal translation of death-related sounds and sensations, the dance locates the performer and the audience in an atmosphere of death and brings to the surface tactile, visceral expressions of body-memory sensations concerned with my lived experience of an encounter with death. In this sense, its function is preparatory for the activities that follow. The macabre and potentially unsettling nature of the dance at the beginning, as well as its strangely doubled and ambiguous recurrence at the end, similarly create an unsettling, mysterious and uncanny environment in which the audience enter into the work and an equally strange atmosphere at its conclusion. The *danse macabre*, I would argue, contributes to the creation of a potentially liminal space in which the performance encounter occurs and establishes the performer, within this space, as a potentially liminal entity.

Micropractice two: reimagining embodied cultural ritual

The second micropractice, sourced from Mantsoe's use of embodied cultural ritual as a means to converse with the dead, became for me a process of identifying and reimagining my own inherited cultural rituals concerning death and mourning. As articulated earlier, Mantsoe's choreographic approach is one that is located in an understanding of the body as an environment of memory that is in constant communication with the ghosts of its ancestors. His work, which takes on ritualising characteristics and draws significantly from embodied cultural rituals relating to trance dance, constitutes, for Mantsoe, a conversation with the dead through dance. In positioning Mantsoe's approach as a departure point for micropractice I began with an exploration of ritualised communion with the dead through practices with which I am familiar, sourced from my own inherited knowledge of the dead.

In line with Mantsoe's understanding of his movement vocabulary as something indebted to his ancestors, I conceptualised for this process a similar understanding and attempted to identify ancestors in the form of past dancers and choreographers whose works have had a lasting and formative impact on my work as a choreographer. The ghosts conjured in *Ghostdance* are therefore the ghosts of other artists whose ideas and influence I recognise

as traces within my practice. During the first performance of the work in February 2017 there were six ghosts invoked in the work, namely: Elu, Pina Bausch, Merce Cunningham, Christopher Kindo⁸⁸, Miss Thandi⁸⁹ and Kazuo Ohno. Subsequent performances of the work also included the ghost of American choreographer, Trisha Brown, who passed away in March 2017.

Departing from the position of self, I then identified three rituals or practices associated with the dead that I was familiar with. These were: the writing of the names of the dead (as carved on headstones, epitaphs or listed on memorial plaques/monuments); the placing of flowers (at grave sites and memorials); and the building or construction of material sculptures in honour of the dead (such as tombstones, mausoleums, statues and/or memorials). Unlike those rituals engaged with by Mantsoe, all of the rituals I identified from my (notably Eurocentric) genealogy seemed to emphasise a segregationist understanding of the dead, rather than an embodied one. These ritual behaviours all concerned the remembrance of the dead through the creation of *momento mori*, as objects or artefacts outside of the body, valued for their ability to document, memorialise or effigy the dead. An objective within the micropractice thus became to uncover ways in which these ritual behaviours might be reimagined to establish an embodied connection and communication with the ghosts of the dead. During the research process, each practice was explored as a departure point to find a performative and embodied encounter with the ghost through a reimagining of the behaviours of the source ritual. After the first *danse macabre* at the beginning of the work, the performer (me) dismounts the wooden platform and begins a (roughly) twenty-minute process of slowly writing the names of the dead on the floor, using the wooden beams comprising the platform which are carried and rearranged to form the words ELU, PINA, MERCE, KINDO, THANDI, OHNO, TRISHA. Each name takes time to appear as the necessary wooden pieces are carefully rearranged and moved across the space. The process is long, meditative and unhurried, as the performer invokes each of the ghosts by

⁸⁸ Christopher Kindo is a South African choreographer, dancer and founder-member of Jazzart Dance Theatre, a contemporary dance company in Cape Town, South Africa. He died in April 2015.

⁸⁹ Miss Thandi is the drag persona of South African performer, Raymond Matinyana. I first encountered Miss Thandi through South African choreographer, Gregory Maqoma's, solo performance entitled *Miss Thandi* (2002). In the work, Maqoma dances his memory of Matinyana/Thandi, who passed away in 2001. Maqoma's work was the first encounter I had with watching contemporary dance and, like Ohno's encounter with La Argentina, the work left a lasting impression on me.

name. The act of writing, as a technology and cornerstone of the Western archive, becomes in this moment, I suggest, temporarily changed through this performative process. As new names form, previous names are either lost completely, when the beams are removed in order to form new ones, or they are changed into other less recognisable symbols or signs, as whole letters or parts of letters are removed. There is thus a subtle irony evoked in the activity because, although written down, the names themselves are unable to *remain* in their written, archival form and continually shift and change, taking other forms or disappearing in order for new forms to emerge (Figure 7).

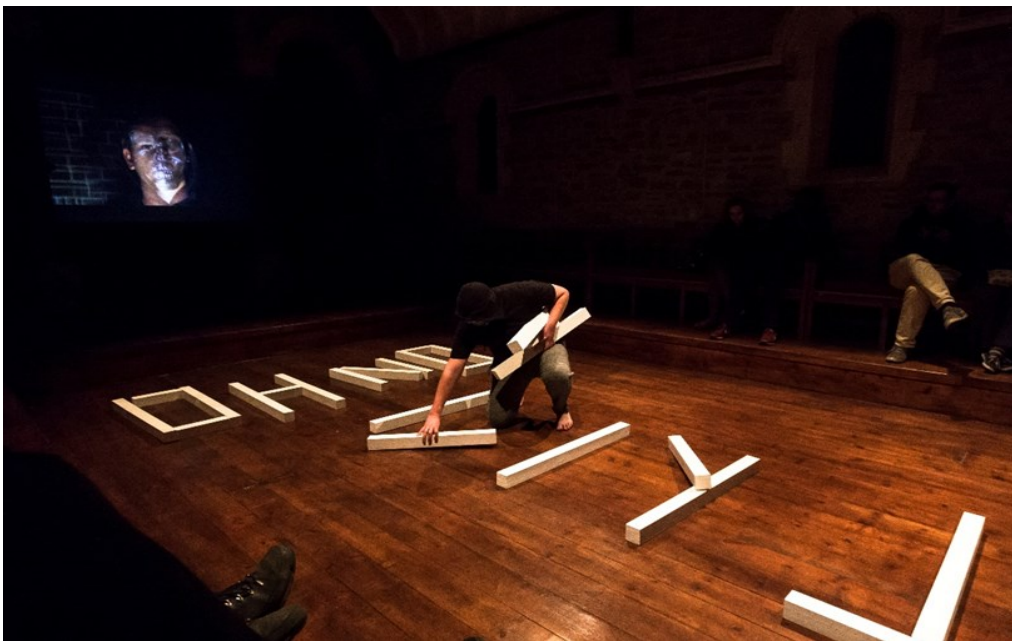


Figure 7: Alan Parker in *Ghostdance for one*. Photographer: Mia van der Merwe

By involving the entire body, the embodied action of writing, as a process, is emphasised rather than just the significance of the written sign itself. Through this, the familiar practice of commemorating the dead through inscription becomes de-familiarised, reimagined into something active, embodied and experiential. Following directly from the first *danse macabre*, the practice can also be seen as an extension or continuation of the Separation phase, where the de-familiarised enacting of writing the dead contributes to the atmosphere of ambiguity and the performer's detachment from fixed understandings of reality.

Similarly, the practice of laying flowers in memory of the dead becomes altered in the work through a desire, during the process, to find ways to emphasise or change the embodied aspect of the action. While the laying of flowers or wreaths at grave sites, altars and memorials is common in funerals and grave-side visitations in various cultures, its framing in *Ghostdance for one* as a ritualising behaviour attempts to shift the potential symbolism conventionally attached to this action. After the last name has been written on the floor, the beams are turned over to reveal small holes in the underside of each beam and are rearranged into an undetermined pattern of horizontals and verticals. The performer then removes the skeleton mask and approaches the field of beams holding a strelitzia flower which is placed in the centre of the field, held upright by the hole in the wooden beam. Six more strelitzias are placed at other locations in the field after which the performer begins to offer flowers to members of the audience. Some audience members accept flowers and the invitation to participate in the activity and similarly place their flowers somewhere in the field.

Following directly from the invocation of the dead by name, the performer's placing of seven flowers (for the seven names inscribed in wood), hints at a similar kind of ritualised invocation. Each flower, I propose, assumes potential significance and presents an opportunity for the audience to invoke the ghosts of their own unnamed dead into the performance space through the creation of, what Kretzmann (2017) describes as, "a field of emblems ... of someone who came before". Emphasis is thus shifted away from the flower itself, as an object to commemorate the dead, and placed instead on the physical process of placing the flower. In constructing the garden, there are more holes than there are flowers, and as such, each participating audience member is asked to decide *where* to position each flower and *how*. In this way, the task has the potential to invite a layer of personal connection or investment that the audience member may, or may not, attach to the action.

Through this encounter a shift in the nature of the performance occurs. Whereas the audience has, up until this moment, sat in the dark as observers to a task in which the performer is completely absorbed, the performance now becomes something that relies on their participation and inclusion. The performance space, previously the exclusive territory of the performer and his ghosts, now includes other bodies who carry out the activities introduced by the performer. Those who do not participate in the actual activity, also now observe other audience members engaged in the act of placing flowers.

The experience of the work, I argue, shifts in tone and atmosphere during this encounter, becoming less concerned with watching the performer doing something in the familiar, representational context of performance, and more about a communal completion of an activity by a group, as one might encounter in a ritual. For some audience members the placing of the flowers appeared, from my perspective as the performer, to take on greater significance as a personalised way to honour or call forth the ghosts of their own dead. During the performance of the work at the Live Art Festival, performance artist Steven Cohen was one of the audience members invited to participate in this ritual with me. As the partner and long-time collaborator of Elu, who had only recently died, the placing of the flowers seemed to take on great significance and emotion. Cohen asked for two flowers when I approached him – one for Elu and one for Nomsa Dlamini, who had passed away in 2016. In placing the flowers, Cohen took his time, deciding where and how to place each stem.

The involvement of the audience in this act of laying flowers, I argue, provides an opportunity for audience members to share in the performer's reconsideration of the ghost and the dead and, as Brunner argues, to "hold a part of something held by many" (2016:68). This description of the anarchic share by Brunner resonates strongly with what Turner (1977:96) calls the "communitas" of ritual processes, where the liminal nature of the rite surfaces a subversive model of society as an "unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals" (1977:96). By including the audience in the laying of flowers, an invitation is extended for individuals to invoke their own ghosts or to directly assist in the invocation of mine, thereby problematising strict delineations between the performer and the audience and complicating clear conceptions of the work as theatre or ritual.

The final reimagined ritual act explored in the work involves the building of memorial objects, such as monuments, tombs and epitaphs in commemoration of the dead. During the creative process, this involved spending time engaging in different ways with the various objects used in the performance, placing them in relation to each other and constructing different forms by combining the many parts. Through this process, the unstable platform on which the performer stands, at the beginning of the work, emerged as well as another structure that strongly resembled a funeral pyre.

Towards the end of the performance, the wooden beams littered throughout the performance space are collected by the performer and stacked on top of each other in the form of a funeral pyre, positioned below the screen. During this process a video collage of recorded footage and still images, created by Rat Western, plays on the screen. The collage is dream/memory-like in the sense that there is no narrative progression to the images which often comprise multiple, unrelated images layered on top of each other. At moments in the six-minute sequence, the digital ghosts of Elu, Cunningham, Bausch, Brown, Miss Thandi, Kindo and Ohno briefly appear and then disappear, captured as traces in archival footage of their performances in the past. Once the pyre is complete, the performer begins to insert the strelitzias into the pyre, with the orange flowers facing outwards to resemble flames. When the last flower is placed, the performer places the mask back on his face and begins the second *danse macabre*, moving slowly backwards, away from the pyre, towards the door (see Figure 8).



Figure 8: Alan Parker in *Ghostdance for one*. Photographer: Mia van der Merwe

Much like the way in which writing, as a technology of capture, is subverted earlier in the work, this construction of a symbolic funeral pyre becomes a way in which to reconsider the practice of monument-building in remembrance of the dead. The tomb and the public memorial are both examples where the creation of an object as a referent for the memory of

the dead, in the world of the living, establishes a segregationist understanding of the dead. As places of memory, these objects become tangible things that remain after the dead have left the world and become places, outside of ourselves, that we can return to in order to be with the dead. In a similar way, the symbolic funeral pyre in *Ghostdance for one* is a construction in honour of the dead, but comprised out of the detritus of the performance, and as such, is only one of multiple, temporary, changing forms that emerge in the work. As human-made structures associated with funerary practices, pyres are interesting because they arguably satiate a desire to build or create something tangible after a person has died, but in burning with the corpse, they do not remain any longer than the corpse itself does. While the funeral pyre in *Ghostdance for one* does not actually burn, its monumentality is as temporary as the names that were written on the floor. Its form-taking, I suggest, can be seen as transient and processual, part of a larger symbolic and cyclical process of creation and destruction, as well as a re-enacting of the physical act of pyre-building – an antiquated act (in many parts of the world), from a time when people were more involved in burying (or burning) their own dead.

Occurring before the second *danse macabre*, the construction of the pyre, I propose, combines with this dance to constitute the Reaggregation or Reincorporation phase of the work. The gathering and symbolic burning of performance detritus and the resumption of the Death character initiate a closure to the event by setting in motion the process for ‘cutting the body loose’. This final phase of the reimagined ritual serves to consummate the passage of all ghostly traces conjured into the room by symbolically cutting them loose from the performance space and, by extension, from the archive.

Micropractice three: re-creating My Mother

The third micropractice informing the creation of the work was guided by a desire to recreate Kazuo Ohno’s *My Mother*. As suggested earlier, the vital role played by Ohno’s embodied memory of his mother’s traces, arguably, renders it impossible for anyone other than Ohno himself to perform this work. The micropractice exploring this conundrum therefore frames Ohno’s dance as a departure point for a different, but related, kind of investigation. I was interested to discover how I would dance the ghost of my own mother using an approach or performance methodology informed by butoh practices and, more specifically, Kazuo Ohno’s unique approach to dancing the dead. I have, in the past, had a small degree of experience

with butoh dance and training⁹⁰ but not to the extent that I felt capable to attempt a process directly informed by Ohno's methods. While Ohno draws from a vast body-library of traces, stretching from the womb to conscious memory, I began with a single memory, specifically the moment of my mother's death. As alluded to in the previous discussion, the remembered physical, affective sensations of this experience were still fresh in my body and thus constituted traces of an encounter with my mother that were internally identifiable and kinaesthetic in nature. One part of the micropractice of dancing my mother thus became a process of trying to identify, experience and actualise these remembered traces through a danced expression of that moment.

These traces included various sensory and somatic impulses, such as my remembered reaction to the sound of my mother's death, an unconscious trembling in my hands, a vacuum in the gut, a lengthening in the neck and a pulling/stretching through the eyes. Many of these sensations could be described as being qualic – that is, “experiences that are resistant to verbal communication” (Whalley & Miller, 2017:79). Qualia, as Joanne Whalley and Lee Miller explain, refer to physical and affective sensations that exist “in the gap between the sensate and the cognate” and thus elude “lexical or linguistic means” (2017:79). As such, these sensations are difficult to explain or describe but provide valuable corporeal starting points for an embodied process of remembering a moment with my mother. These qualic sensations were combined with other textures or qualities I associate with my mother and recognise in my own behaviour as reiterative gestures. Through an improvisational practice, these different qualities were explored in different combinations and manifestations. A physical image that I returned to often involved the slow squeezing and then stretching of the mouth and lips combined with a sideways and downward pull of the left cheek, a forward reaching of the face and downward squeezing of the belly and internal organs. The combination of these qualities of stretching, pulling, reaching and squeezing in multiple spatial directions evoked in me a strong affective response reminiscent of my memory of the moment.

In Ohno's original dance he wears a white dress-like costume and holds a white paper flower in his hand. Re-exploring a strategy from *Detritus for one*, I also experimented with the use of a latex strelitzia flower, as a kind of fake archival object, and a flower I associate with

⁹⁰ In 2010 I participated in an eight-week residency programme with Swedish butoh artist Frauke, whose training in butoh stems from Hijikata through teachers Min Tanaka (Japan) and Su-En (Sweden).

my mother. Similarly, I wore an orange and white dress whose texture and pattern reminded me of something my mother would have worn while I was a small child in the 1980s.⁹¹ During the process I often felt the desire to place the stem of the flower in my mouth, and while this is not a motif in Ohno's original, the action in this context seemed authentic, on a personal level, as an expression (see Figure 9). The activity of trying to navigate through space while trying to hold the flower upright in my mouth, feeling my way through the wooden beams on the floor with my toes, also emerged through various improvisations and became a task I would return to during performance to try and find a connection to my mother's ghost.

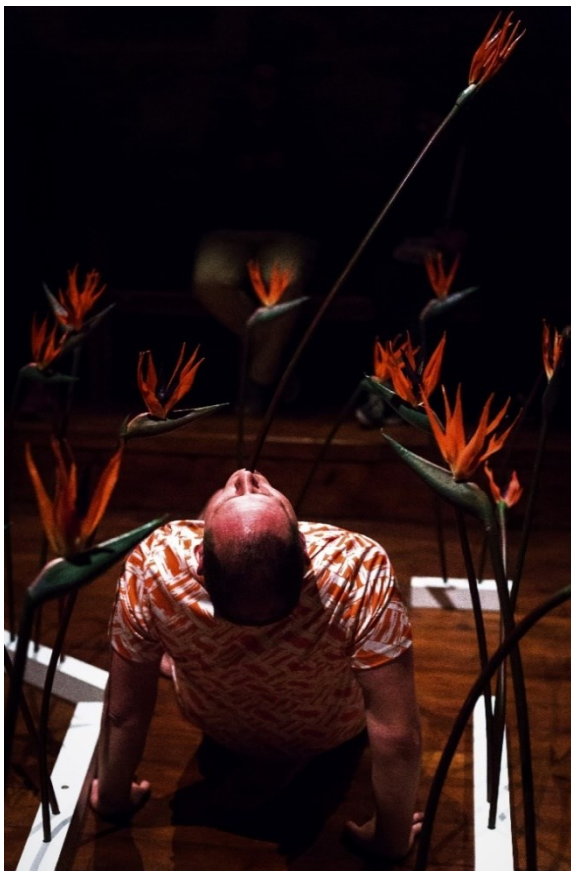


Figure 9: Alan Parker in *Ghostdance for one*. Photographer Mia van der Merwe

In performance, the recreation of Ohno's *My Mother* is preceded by a verbal eulogy. During the eulogy I speak directly to the audience and share the memory of my last moments with my mother. The eulogy is unscripted in the sense that the exact words uttered are

⁹¹ In the first performance of the work in February 2017 I did not wear a dress during this dance. The dress was added in the July version as a way to help me find a stronger sense of transformation and to help the audience in witnessing this transforming of the performer away from self, toward something else.

unplanned and un-composed. Each performance of the work required me to approach this moment from a different angle or in a different way because it was important that the sharing of my experience felt unmasked and sincere for the audience. The intention was to be as real as possible and to resurrect, in the present, an encounter with death in the past as an embodied, visceral experience rather than a purely cerebral memory relayed and refined through narrative construction. This encounter with the audience, I suggest, lies somewhere between the delivery of a eulogy at a funeral and an intimate and personal reliving of a difficult experience.

Entering the garden of flowers, I then attempt to dance the ghost of my mother. The dance is brief, lasting four or five minutes, as I try to find the qualic memories, affects and traces of my mother and co-compose with these as a means to bring the ghost into physical form. The delivery of both the spoken and danced eulogies manifest, I suggest, a notably liminal encounter, or what Turner calls the Margin or Liminal phase, where “the characteristics of the subject are ambiguous” (1977:94). Through the interconnected activities of verbally remembering my mother’s death and dancing her ghost, I inhabit an in-between space that can be seen to contribute to a liminal framing of the performer (and the performance) as existing somewhere between theatre and ritual, reality and fabrication, the present and the past and the living and the dead.

A willingness to follow ghosts – towards anarchival reworlding

While each of the three works comprising the (an)archival trilogy are relatively distinct in their anarchival focus and form, the engagement with ritual, as explicated above, significantly differentiates *Ghostdance for one* from the two earlier explorations. Both *Detritus for one* and *Sacre for one* are created for theatre spaces and although each work, as I have argued thus far, actively seeks to establish visceral, affective encounters and ecologies with the audience, this relationship is framed within the realm of theatre. By engaging with ritual through the context of performance, *Ghostdance for one* differs in how this encounter with an audience unfolds, the nature of this relationship, and what it seeks to do.

In addition to its ritualistic nature, *Ghostdance for one* also adds to the exploration of the anarchival, an additional layer that is absent in the two earlier works – the digital. Whereas

the two previous encounters with the archive rely solely on the body, material objects and memory in the performance of anarchival micropractices, in this work the digital forms an integral part of the performance encounter and its sharing. In this way, an archive of past actions and moving expressions, filmed in the past, juxtaposes and converses, quite literally, with the performer and the audience in the present moment of anarchival sharing. The presence of the digital archive and its virtual images of moving, virtual bodies thus surface another understanding of the virtual trace in relation to the digital image; as that which is real but not concrete, present but not actually there, animate and alive but also long dead.

Prior to the filmic memory-collage, in which virtual images of the ghosts invoked in the work manifest on the screen (which I described earlier), Western's film includes several instances of video diary-like footage which involve me speaking directly into the lens of the camera. This footage, filmed in January 2017, presents different personal musings on several topics relating to ghosts and the archive as well as the sharing of my memory of watching Maqoma's dancing of Miss Thandi and a conversation I once had with another choreographer who expressed a desire to set fire to her personal archive. These moments of the virtual-performer, speaking directly to the audience, are interspersed at various points throughout the performance of the embodied ritual. While the unfolding of the live actions and activities, as a kind of ritual performance involving the body, objects and the conjuring of ghosts, prioritises a visceral, affective expression of ghostly traces, the parallel digital performance unfolds in a different way and is concerned, for the most part, with the narrative sharing of recollections and thoughts or ideas, still forming, which underpin the research in a meta-theatrical way. The digital layer of the work can thus be seen to bring into the "maniacally charged present" (Phelan, 1993:148) moment of the performance a notably direct manifestation of the past and the ghostly virtual traces nascent in the work but in a way that appeals more, I would argue, to a cognitive understanding or interpretation of the ghost, unfolding alongside a potentially affective one.

This, I suggest, contributes to the atmosphere of strangeness and the liminal framing of the performance. Whalley and Miller note that performance, as an encounter between a performer and an audience, is already a potentially strange experience because it is "a context which is multiple, both real and imagined" (2017:15). When this already strange context is made stranger, by further complicating clear distinctions between what is real and what is

imagined, who is audience and who is performer, the resulting ambiguity encourages, Whalley and Miller suggest, “the potential for affect to emerge” (2017:91). In this way, while the digital layer of *Ghostdance for one* might, at times, communicate and represent images of clear interpretable meaning for the audience, its co-composing with the embodied and affective live performance, within the event as a whole, I argue, also contributes to and heightens the pervading strangeness of the encounter.

This atmosphere of strangeness is particularly necessary when engaging with the ghost because, as Gordon suggests, “[t]he way of the ghost is haunting and haunting is a very particular way of knowing what has happened or is happening” (2008:8). To experience haunting Radway explains, is to experience an alternate “being in time” that is typified by uncertainty and ambiguity: “[T]hose singular yet repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar, when your bearings on the world lose direction, when the over-and-done-with comes alive, when what’s been in your blind spot comes into view” (2008:xvi). From this experience of time as unstable and haunted, where past and present are difficult to distinguish from each other, the ghost, Gordon argues, “draws us affectively [...] into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition” (2008:8).

The encounter with ghosts in *Ghostdance for one*, I suggest here, creates one such haunted and ambiguous space that has the potential to facilitate an affective encounter and thus an alternative, potentially disruptive, ‘transformative recognition’ of being in time where present and past overlap and fold into each other. It is obviously implausible to speak of certainties in relation to audience experience, since this is inevitably multiplicitous, pluralistic and varied. I do, however, speak here of potentialities – opportunities and invitations in the work which present possibilities for particular kinds of encounters and experiences to emerge. An important aspect of haunting, which Gordon acknowledges, is that engaging with ghosts requires both the “paying attention to ghosts” (2008:27) as well as a “willingness to follow” (2008:57). The ghost, Gordon argues, can lead you to unexpected places but only “if you let it” (2008:58). In a similar way, *Ghostdance for one*, through its reimagining of particular embodied rituals and its attempt to create and establish a sense of ritual *communitas* with the audience, offers an invitation for an affective encounter with ghosts in a haunted world-

within-a-world. This invitation, however, requires a willingness on the part of the audience and a desire to submerge themselves within a world of ghosts and virtual traces.

As Massumi notes: “To affect and to be affected is to be both in and of the world, to be active in it and to be patient for its return activity” (2015:xi). Becoming part of a world, in this sense, is thus to recognise and experience an alternative mode of being where, “rather than thinking of ourselves only as observers [...] of a ready-formed world, we must imagine ourselves [...] as participants, each immersed with the whole of our being in the currents of a world-in-formation” (Tim Ingold in Escobar, 2017:87). The world conjured in *Ghostdance for one*, where the living and the dead co-exist and affect one another, emerges, I suggest, through a process that Escobar describes as “reworlding” (2017:118). Relative to a Heideggerian conception of the world as always in formation and processes of becoming, reworlding, Escobar suggests, is the subversive practice of “redesigning [...] our very ways of thinking and being” (2017:118). The reworlding of a world is thus a process of imagining and then creating alternative worlds of difference through practice, with alternate temporalities and ontologies. In *Ghostdance for one*, this world is imagined as processual and always in formation, comprised of some specific ghosts, conjured by the performer, as well as many other potential ghosts imagined into the world by any of the participants. In this reworlding of a world-within-a-world, past and present, living and dead, coalesce, affecting each other and being affected.

As an embodied practice, reworlding becomes, in this instance, anarchival because it dislocates the ghost out of the archive and places it firmly back into a “complex temporality” (Franko, 2011b:117) alongside other bodies and actions which it can affect and be affected by and thus ‘stir up disorder’ (Mbembe, 2002:22) and initiate change. Anarchival reworlding thus resonates with Mantsoe’s assertion, noted earlier, that ritual-based performances can manifest an encounter with the audience that is rooted in “processes of *re-education* and ‘healing’” (Vedel, 2007:94, italics in original). By encountering the ghost, differently, in another kind of temporality where present and past are not so far apart, we can also begin to think in other ways, and be in the world, differently.

Towards effigy

Through reworlding a world with the audience, the performer in *Ghostdance for one*, I suggest, becomes a kind of conduit or guide for the anarchival exploration of the ghost as a source of knowing and memory. As the performer explores the process and problem of 'stirring up the dead,' this experience initiates a reworlding and becomes something that the members of the audience are also able to become a part of and to interrogate alongside and with the performer's actions. In this way, the body of the performer assumes an effigial role, becoming a living effigy through which exploration, invocation and reworlding occur. The performer thus facilitates communication with the dead for himself, on a personal level, but also as a surrogate, on behalf of those who share in the event. In Part 2 these potentials of effigy, as an embodied and performative practice for anarchival investigation, are considered and extrapolated in relation to three performance works that engage with ritual through the body as effigy.

PART 2: EFFIGY AND THE DISRUPTION OF KNOWLEDGE⁹²

Within the embodied archive, the performance of cultural ritual emerges as a particularly significant example of the passing down of knowledge through inherited and learned behaviour. As noted in Chapter Four, Bell (1992:147) has loosely defined ritual (in relation to traditionalism) as a series of embodied activities that are perceived to transcend the present by connecting to values, knowledge and traditions that are regarded as ancient and/or timeless. These ritual behaviours are passed down from generation to generation where, through their framing as sacred activities, importance is placed on their continued repetition and the restoration of the behaviour in markedly similar ways. Toward this end, often strict socio-cultural rules and regulations regarding who can perform the ritual, how it must be performed, as well as where and when the ritual can occur, serve to govern the manner in which the behaviour is passed down and restored in future generations. Through this socio-cultural framing, ritual acts become imbued with both the knowledge of the past as well as

⁹² This section draws extensively from a paper I wrote in 2018 and which appears in the book, *Acts of transgression: contemporary live art in South Africa* (2019) under the title: 'Effigy in the Archive: ritualising performance and the dead in contemporary South African live art practice' (Parker, 2019:243-264).

those ideological belief systems and discourses from which this knowledge emerges, which continue to haunt bodies in the present.

In negotiating this inherited knowledge, the anarchival, as that which is 'above', 'against', 'wrong' and upside-down' of the archive (Adami & Ferrini, 2014), becomes an exploratory methodology through which to engage with these ghosts and to disrupt, subvert, question and challenge their hauntings in the present moment through the re-actualisation of virtual traces into new and different forms. In the discussion that follows, I consider some of the ways in which an anarchival engagement with the ghost through the performance of effigy can be seen to interrogate, disrupt and challenge knowledge passed down from the past, particularly through embodied archival sources. Three performance works by South African artists Gavin Krastin, Sello Pesa and Igshaan Adams are considered as case studies to further explicate the ways in which rituals concerned with the dead might be reinvented and reimagined as a means to rethink knowledge of the past in the particular context of current South African live art practice. Toward this end, my analysis considers relationships between the embodied and written archive, performance and memory, and historical cultural rituals and their reimagining as ritualising or ritual-like performances.

I make a distinction here between the terms 'ritualising' and 'ritual-like' in a manner informed by Bell's (1992:90) distinction between "ritualization" and "ritual". *Ritualising* is used to denote practices or behaviours that are performed in a ritualistic way or appear to have sacred symbolism, but where the behaviour itself may not originate in existing cultural rituals or traditions. In contrast, I use the term *ritual-like* to describe behaviours that appear ritualistic or are recognisable as ritual behaviours connected to tradition but are performed in a profane manner where the functionality of the behaviour is emphasised over any resultant symbolism. The specific works selected for analysis include Krastin's *Rough Musick* (2013), Pesa's *Limelight on Rites* (2014) and Adams' *Bismillah* (2014).

Performing memory through effigy

In his analysis of ritual performances of death in Haiti, Myron Beasley suggests, "To engage with death is to open the body to a series of performative possibilities" (2010:44). He argues that by engaging with death, specifically through performance and performative rituals, it

becomes possible to “unravel the realities of the living and the dead” where the physical body becomes both a site for “interrogating a host of limitless engagements with the spiritual realm” (2010:44) and a vessel for the “utterances” of the dead. In a similar vein, Roach, in the introduction to his book *Cities of the dead: Circum-Atlantic performance* (1996), states, “The voices of the dead may speak freely now only through the bodies of the living” (1996:xiii). Both Beasley and Roach describe the performing body as a kind of effigy for the ghosts of the dead, where the living body of the performer becomes both a medium for their ‘voices’ and a mediator of their knowledge.

Roach locates his particular analysis of performances that engage with death in, what he calls, ‘circum-Atlantic performance’. By circum-Atlantic, Roach refers to those areas surrounding the Atlantic Ocean where socio-cultural creolisation, resulting from centuries of mixing peoples and belief systems through the transatlantic slave trade and the colonial expansion of Europeans into Africa and the Americas, is particularly evident and where conflicting understandings of the dead and diverse knowledge systems necessitate renegotiation in postcolonial and decolonial contexts. In his analysis Roach considers the different ways in which performance and embodied ritual have emerged as forms through which to renegotiate this conflict with regards to knowledge, cultural memory and an inherited separation from the dead (through colonisation and conquest). In this particular context, he proposes, embodied performance emerges as one way in which to “bring forth, to make manifest, and to transmit” (1996:x) the memory of the dead within the activities of the living as a means to interrogate a (re)connection to subjugated epistemologies associated with the dead.

Roach identifies effigy as a recurring method through which communities converse with their corporeal genealogies as a means to reinvent embodied knowledge. In this conception effigy is acknowledged as both a noun and a verb. In its noun form, the effigy concerns a “specially nominated medium or surrogate” (1996:36) who, on behalf of a community or group, becomes a representative for the source, now absent, from whom memory originates. Effigies in this understanding include “actors, dancers, priests, street maskers and corpses” (1996:36) and their function is to effigy (as a verb), “to evoke an absence, to body something forth, especially from a distant past” (1996:36). The performance of effigy can therefore be seen to function on two levels toward facilitating conversation with

the dead. The surrogate or medium who assumes the effigial role communes with the memory of the dead directly, through their own bodies, while simultaneously enabling and supporting a similar communication for those for whom they effigy – the audience.

In his analysis of performances through effigy Roach observes, “Memory is a process that depends crucially on forgetting” (1996:2). Whether knowledge is stored as a document in an archive or as an embodied gesture within a ritual or performance, forgetting emerges as a crucial aspect of memory and an inevitable by-product of both the written archive’s transformation of memory into document and the body’s fluid, unfixed capacity to store memory, as discussed in Chapter One. In both instances, that which is forgotten is not lost but rather, through its forgetting, becomes a virtual trace within the archive that has the potential to be re-actualised, differently, in a different time. Processes of forgetting are therefore also processes of re-imagination where, in trying to re-member what has been forgotten, something new is able to materialise, as an “afterlife” (Lepecki, 2010:28) of a trace, but in a new, restorative, and changed form.

Roach (1996:26-28) identifies three principles which support this conversation through effigy occurring between the bodies of the living and those of the dead. He describes these principles as “kinesthetic imagination”, “vortices of behavior” and “displaced transmission.” As a means to elucidate the ways in which these principles operate in relation to the performance of memory through effigy, and towards an explication of the potential value in embodied memory’s reinvention as a disruption of both written and embodied archival knowledge, I will consider these principles in relation to those performance works identified earlier.

***Rough Musick* and the ‘kinesthetic imagination’⁹³**

Roach explains this first principle as the actual process of remembering and then performing embodied cultural behaviours. He describes the kinesthetic imagination as the virtual space in which memory and imagination converge, where in remembering embodied behaviours, their restoration, repetition and performance in the present require a simultaneous

⁹³ My analysis of Krastin’s work is informed by my participation in the performance and its creative process. My role in *Rough Musick* was as a performer and dramaturge.

“imaginative expansion” (1996:27). The repetition of the behaviour thus also constitutes its reimagining and reinvention. In this sense, by remembering a past behaviour, the conversion of this memory (as a kind of trace) into a physical action requires an imaginative and creative process, where a change occurs between the remembering of the trace and its actualisation by the body as action. There are naturally degrees to the extent of this change, but Roach’s proposition is that even when behaviours are performed with the intention of repeating them in a manner markedly similar to the original, learned behaviour (as in the case of sacred ritual), a process of reimagination inevitably occurs.

In the realm of ritualising performance the extent of a behaviour’s reimagining is arguably more open to a greater degree of reinvention, where emphasis can be placed on a creative re-engagement with the behaviour somewhat distanced from strict socio-cultural and/or religious regulations regarding the performance of that behaviour. This is perhaps what Beasley means when he identifies the “performative possibilities” (2010:44) of engaging with death through the performing body. By engaging with ritual behaviours in the context of ritualising performance (which balances delicately between the sacred and the profane) these behaviours become open and available to a higher degree of re-imagination and critique than they might be in the purely sacred context of cultural ritual.

A similar engagement with the kinesthetic imagination can be seen in Gavin Krastin’s, *Rough Musick*, where the reimagining of inherited cultural behaviours becomes a way in which to converse with the traces of the dead nascent in one’s own body and to surface and question the knowledge (and its ideological origins) embedded in these genealogical practices. *Rough Musick* premiered at the National Arts Festival in Makhanda in July 2013. Billed as Performance Art, the work is a site-specific performance installed in two adjoining rooms on the campus of St Andrews, a private boarding school. The specific building is one of the school’s oldest but has subsequently been converted into a boy’s locker-room. Krastin was drawn to the locker-room as a performance space due to the work’s intended thematic focus on rituals of shaming and potential associations with the boy’s locker-room as a place where contemporary acts of shaming, particularly in relation to masculinity and sexuality, pervade. While Krastin was conducting research for the work the antiquated ritual practice of rough musick emerged as a central impulse underpinning the work and subsequently became its title. Originating in medieval Europe, the practice involved the performative shaming of

criminals and sexual deviants, often preceding their execution, by banging household objects (such as pots and pans) as a public expression of social exclusion (Krastin, 2013). This cacophony of sound, utilised as an embodied expression of shame, constituted the rough musick.

Krastin's initial intentions in creating the work had less to do with death and were more concerned with reimagining historical rituals emerging from a society's need to punish those deemed other. He was particularly drawn to rituals sourced from medieval Britain because, as a second generation South African, these practices resonated with Krastin's own genealogical ties to a culture and ancestry that he regarded as disconnected or other to his everyday lived experience. He describes the work as "an ambiguous contemporary re-engaging ... where the pre-Empire white culture of the United Kingdom is rendered exotic and strange, positioning the artist-of-European-descent as ethnically other" (Krastin, 2013). For Krastin, the work "attempts to return the colonial ethnographic eye back onto the colonial headquarters and appropriate rituals and practices from a culture that is typically used to doing all of the appropriating" (in Vile, 2016). The work is thus deeply connected to a desire, by the artist, to engage with performance as a means to reimagine cultural rituals and, more importantly, to challenge and disrupt the knowledge and cultural memory at the root of these practices.

While rehearsing the work in early 2013, Krastin's (British) grandmother became unwell and for many months it seemed likely that she would not live for much longer. The trauma and anxiety experienced by Krastin in waiting for death to happen was compounded by the unexpected passing of his (British) grandfather two months prior to the first performance of the work. This atmosphere of death, loss and mourning inevitably influenced the creation of the work to the extent that, from my perspective as a performer and dramaturge, *Rough Musick* became enmeshed with Krastin's personal need to contemplate death, memory, loss and the inherited genealogical behaviours connecting him to his ancestors.

Like *Ghostdance for one*, *Rough Musick* is not a performance of a specific cultural ritual but rather a ritualising performance that emerges through the combining of various ritualistic behaviours and processes. Turner's (1977) three phases of rites of passage (as discussed in Part 1) similarly correspond to the progression of practices in *Rough Musick*. The first

Separation phase, which signifies the detachment of the deceased from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, correlates with the first section of Krastin's performance. *Rough Musick* begins with the audience in a stone-walled antechamber. My character, with face obscured by a latex mask, sits on a child's rocking horse, wearing pink slippers and a floral nightgown one might associate with an elderly British woman. In this first section of the performance, I remove a black cloth on the floor to reveal the naked body of Krastin, vacuum-packed in a transparent body bag. A bizarre duet occurs where the preserved body of Krastin is manipulated, carried, rearranged, and held. There is no exact narrative and the encounter is one that fluctuates between functionality and tenderness. At times Krastin's body is handled with care, at other times it is treated as an object. In this encounter Krastin does not feign death. His body is visibly alive and he often moves of his own accord. The encounter serves as a symbolic distancing that situates both of our bodies outside of the binaries of life and death and past and present. Krastin appears both dead and alive, and my character is engaged in mourning but has also moved on.

Turner's second phase, the Margin or Liminal period, correlates with the majority of Krastin's activity in the performance of *Rough Musick*. Following the duet with Krastin's body, the audience move into another room. Krastin enters this space, no longer vacuum-packed, wearing thigh-high, hoof-like boots and an inflatable mask that covers his entire head. He then performs a series of actions which include a dance of seduction, the robbery of three audience members,⁹⁴ his adornment in symbols of the British royal family (scored by *God save the Queen*) and the burial of a dead dog (to *The White Cliffs of Dover*). During these activities and processes, Krastin is surrounded by symbols of British culture which he passes through as a liminal entity, as someone caught between two sides of a transitional journey. He is both a descendant of British culture as well as its other.

The performance concludes with the final phase of death-related ritual – the consummation of the deceased's passage into another realm. In the concluding moments of *Rough Musick*, Krastin is attached to a medieval-looking chariot and paraded around the room while the audience are invited to shame his body by creating rough musick (with provided

⁹⁴ Following his dance of seduction, Krastin pulls three male members of the audience out of their seats and seductively rummages through their pockets taking any money that he finds. This money is used later in the performance as an offering to the dead that Krastin places on the white chalk grave of a buried dog.

pots and pans) and by throwing tomatoes and eggs (also provided). Krastin's chariot is then wheeled outside and attached to a donkey. The audience are invited outside to bear witness as Krastin's body is pulled down the street, towed behind the donkey.⁹⁵

In performing the work, Krastin positions his own body as the effigy through which this conversation with death and memory occurs, and serves a dual effigial role. On a personal level, his role as effigy allows his performance of memory to emerge from, and in relation to, his own physiology and embodied genealogy. Krastin, however, also positions his body, in a depersonalised manner, as an effigy for the audience. In this instance, the artist 'Gavin Krastin' is not the effigy, rather he situates his body as a vessel, separate from himself, through which the audience can effigy. Throughout the performance Krastin works to dehumanise his own presence and to appear monstrous, abject and other through his movement and costuming as a means to establish for the audience an effigy that is materially present, but that is not him.

As the various ritual behaviours unfold in the work, the audience are regularly offered the opportunity to participate in the ritual. These interactions, however, are not forced. The audience are provided with the necessary tools to shame Krastin's effigy and participate in the remembered (reimagined) behaviours, but these invitations serve to instigate a decision on the part of the individual audience member of whether to participate in the shaming of the effigy or to sit back and witness his shaming by others. Krastin's particular engagement with effigy thus also recalls the violence so often associated with effigy (I am reminded of the phrase "to burn in effigy") where the symbolic surrogate must bear the responsibility, significance and punishment of that which they represent. Each performance of *Rough Musick* reveals divisions within the audience between those who enthusiastically participate in the shaming of Krastin's effigy, those who refuse, and those who seem to participate out of a perceived obligation and appear as unwilling participants.⁹⁶

As a performance that can be seen to reinvent memory, Krastin's *Rough Musick* represents an engagement with Roach's principle of 'kinesthetic imagination', where memory

⁹⁵ Only the original performances in Makhanda involved the use of a donkey. Subsequent iterations concluded with me pulling Krastin and the chariot out of the performance space.

⁹⁶ This statement is based on my observation of certain audience members in various performances who would agree to participate in the shaming of Krastin's body but without committing fully to this role. These audience members would, for example, volunteer to throw an egg/tomato at Krastin but deliberately miss hitting him.

and imagination converge in the performance of restored embodied behaviours. In performing *Rough Musick*, Krastin references an array of antiquated rituals, practices, symbols and behaviours sourced from his genealogical connection to a British ancestry, inherited through his grandparents, which necessitate reimagining because their origins have become other to Krastin's own space of existence. The ritual practice of rough musick itself represents the most obvious reimagination of behaviour in the work. As described above, Krastin sets up a performative context where the audience are asked to participate in the shaming of his effigy through restoration of this behaviour in a contemporary setting. The actual behaviour, if reduced to the physical actions of throwing food or creating sound through banging, remains relatively unchanged. The reimagination of the behaviour occurs, I would argue, in relation to Krastin's body and his role as effigy in the restoration of the behaviour.

Building up to his ritualised shaming, Krastin alludes to and references several crimes (predominantly against heteronormativity) associated with his body, which might contextualise his shaming. Firstly, his visual aesthetic through costuming is one that strongly references fetishised sexuality and BDSM practices.⁹⁷ Secondly, his appearance throughout the work is notably gender-fluid. Although naked in the vacuum-sealed plastic body bag, Krastin's genitals are tucked in such a way that the audience are unable to identify a penis and instead are presented with a fleshy mound where his genitals should be. In a similar way, Krastin's other costumes in the work could be described as 'gender-fuck' in the sense that he wears thigh-high boots, a tasselled skirt and costume jewellery (heteronormatively considered female apparel) but is bare-chested and thus also visibly male. Thirdly, Krastin also commits three legal crimes in the performance, namely the sexual harassment of three male members of the audience, the stealing of their money, and his fraudulent impersonation (and mocking) of Queen Elizabeth II (and the lineage of British monarchs she represents).

When Krastin offers the audience the opportunity to participate in the restoration of the rough musick behaviour, the practice becomes reinvented through his ambiguous framing of the effigy to be shamed. It is unclear what, exactly, Krastin's effigy is being shamed and punished for. Is it because of his own otherness? Is it because he has deviated from

⁹⁷ Many of the masks, props and costume apparel that Krastin wears are sourced from retailers and online stores that specialise in fetish, bondage and sex-related products. BDSM is an acronym comprised of Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission, Sadism and Masochism.

heteronormative understandings of sex, sexuality and gender? Is it because he is a criminal who has stolen, seduced and mocked another? Or is it because he is a descendant of a culture that has (historically) stolen from, seduced and mocked the other? In deciding to participate in his shaming, the audience arguably become complicit in these questions through their restoration of this behaviour. Krastin encourages the audience to consider: what exactly are you shaming? What part of this effigy, written in multiple layers of representation, are you punishing and shaming?

Another interesting example of reimagined behaviour occurs when Krastin buries the life-like corpse of a small dog in white chalk. He carries the chalk with a shovel from a large pile in the corner while *The White Cliffs of Dover* plays in the background. This action of burial is difficult and strenuous for Krastin to perform because his shoes make it challenging to walk, his mouth is gagged with an inflatable penis sex-toy and his head is locked inside a heavy metal cage (see Figure 10). The image, I would argue, is saturated with nostalgia, struggle and ambiguous significance for the outside observer, but for Krastin the activity becomes a performance of memory and the symbolic, re-imagined repetition of a familiar behaviour – the burying of the dead in the symbols of culture. In a literal sense, Krastin is re-enacting the burying of a pet – a behaviour some people might potentially relate to or have experience of. In another sense, however, the burying of the dog is reimagined as a symbolic act, where the dog becomes another effigy and, through surrogation, assumes a multitude of other absences. The behaviour becomes reimagined as the burial of a cultural ancestry, of antiquated traditions, beliefs and sensibilities and, more personally, of Krastin's own familial dead. In reinventing this behaviour Krastin translates the emotional difficulty of dealing with loss into an overtly physical hardship. While transporting the white chalk across the room in order to bury the dog, Krastin struggles to balance and walk (because of his hoof-like shoes), he uses his wrists and forearms (instead of his hands) to hold and manipulate the shovel containing the chalk, and he audibly struggles to breath (because of the gag in his mouth and the heavy head-cage). The physical act of burying the dog becomes reimagined as another physical punishment that his body must endure.



Figure 10: Gavin Krastin in *Rough Musick*. Photographer: Suzy Bernstein

As Krastin reinvents the antiquated rituals of his ancestry, these rituals are able to take on new significances, for him (privately) as well as for those who observe and participate in the re-imagination with him. Critic Adrienne Sichel (2013) writes, “*Rough Musick* functions as a requiem for victims of gender violence and as a site-specific intervention in which unsettling tactile performance taps into psychological playgrounds and intellectual hinterlands.” Through an imaginative approach to the restoration of cultural behaviour, Krastin creates an encounter between an audience and his effigy, where the contemporary significances and politics of shaming are unearthed and where his own ancestral, genealogical and psychological hinterlands are questioned and explored.

Limelight on Rites and ‘vortices of behavior’

Roach’s second principle, ‘vortices of behavior’, refers to those places of memory that become palimpsestuous through their intersections with other kinds of behaviours, creating a clashing that initiates a reinvention of remembered behaviour. Roach explains, “The vortex is a kind of spatially induced carnival, a centre of self-invention through the restoration of behaviour” (1996:28). Places of memory, as designated spaces for the memory of the dead, are often defined by their architecture and are separated, or at least demarcated in some way, as distinct from the everyday lives of the living. Despite this separation, behaviours from the outside are inevitably carried into these places through their visitation by people where they ultimately mix with the behaviours associated with these places. Roach argues that these spaces often become ludic and carnivalesque through their placement and framing as *public* private spaces, where behaviours associated with remembering the dead come into close proximity and juxtaposition with other kinds of inherited socio-cultural actions. These behaviours rub up against each other and, in some cases, converge and cross-pollinate to create new, reimagined behaviours. For Roach, cemeteries represent behavioural vortices because, as places reserved for the dead and their visitation by the living, they constitute spaces where multiple behaviours, originating from varying socio-cultural contexts, coalesce and combine. The New Orleans jazz funeral, as discussed in Part 1, is one such example, where funerary behaviours sourced from European Catholicism and West African traditions have combined with local, creolised social practices (relating to New Orleans jazz music and dancing) to create a reinvented and reimagined behavioural practice resulting from multiple influences (Roach, 1996:59-63).

Like *Rough Musick*, Pesa’s *Limelight on Rites* represents a similar performative interrogation of the dynamic between the rituals of one’s ancestors and their significance to their progeny in the present. Originally created in 2010, the work has been performed in various forms and locations. I attended a performance of the work in September 2014 as part of the Live Art Festival in Cape Town and, after watching archival footage of earlier versions, it is clear that the performance I experienced differed substantially from other iterations and so my analysis here is particular to the performance I encountered.

Pesa's *Limelight on Rites* is a loud, visceral-visual, performative deluge of ritual-like activity and behaviour. I use the term 'ritual-like' because the experience of the work feels devoid of ritual, even though the activities themselves directly reference ritual behaviours one might expect to encounter at a funeral or ceremony of mourning. In the work Pesa creates a volatile space in which multiple behaviours sourced from both historical and contemporary funerary practices, as well as social urban behaviour, intersect, overlap and juxtapose against each other. The work is fundamentally a critique on rituals of the dead and questions the efficacy and intentions of contemporary rites of burial in a time where "Death is big business" (Gordon Institute for Performing and Creative Arts, 2014) and an overt commercialisation and commodification of death and its rituals has occurred. On another level, however, the work also surfaces many complex questions surrounding the conflict between indigenous cultural traditions (and knowledge) and urban, westernised rituals of death and burial. Like *Ghostdance for one* and *Rough Musick*, *Limelight on Rites* is thus also an embodied and performative interrogation of knowledge and cultural ancestries through a questioning of inherited genealogical behaviours in relation to contemporary practices and contexts. The work becomes, through the clashing of these behaviours, a critique on the relevance of adapted, appropriated or westernised behaviours in relation to their significance within the nexus of postcolonial, 'third-space' (Bhabha, 1994) identities and complex notions of self.

The performance begins before the audience enter into a large reception room inside the Cape Town City Hall. As the audience filter in, *kwaito* house music is playing, very loudly, from a sound system in the centre of the room and two men dance joyously, around a coffin set atop a gurney.⁹⁸ As the men dance, some audience members begin to join in. At a point, one of the men (Pesa) begins to move the coffin, rolling it around the room as if it were a dance partner in a reimagined *danse macabre*. While this unfolds, another performer, dressed as a businesswoman, sits at a desk on the periphery of the room. She flips through a notebook and, intermittently, answers the phone, sometimes leaving the room while talking loudly on her phone. Steadily, other behaviours begin to emerge, congealing with the music, the busy activities of the office worker and the strange dance between the living and the dead, represented through the coffin. Another woman appears and begins to hand out pamphlets for a funeral policy; a man begins to set out plastic chairs in rows for the audience to sit on; a

⁹⁸ Kwaito is a genre of music popular in South Africa. It is a locally-produced variation of house music.

woman approaches individual audience members and performs a kind of libation with wine, fruit, flowers and a candle; a couple make their way around the room, introducing themselves to individual audience members; a piece of artificial lawn appears and artificial flowers are arranged on top of it; a table of food is carried in and people begin to feast. The performance evolves into chaos as all of these behaviours associated with death rub up against each other in a shared space and at the same time.

Despite the fact that many of the ritual behaviours occur concurrently or follow on directly from each other (performed by the same small group of performers), in most instances these behaviours seem disconnected and distanced from each other. There is no apparent logic, narrative, nor perceivable structure to the progression of one rite to the next. In terms of Turner's (1977) three phases of ritual progression, *Limelight on Rites* seems to stall at the Separation phase. As such, the behaviours themselves begin to take on a routine, pedestrian quality even though the performers appear visibly invested, in terms of energy and intention, in what they are doing. Christine Davis notes, "Funerals exist in a liminal space in which the everyday becomes the sacred" (2008:415). In Pesa's vortex, however, these sacred behaviours seem incapable of transcendence and remain disturbingly everyday. I suggest that this is not the result of the performers' reframing of the ritual behaviours as pedestrian tasks, but rather emerges from the audience's inability to interpret, understand and connect meaningfully, through ritual *communitas*, to the behaviours as they unfold.

Typically, funerary rituals "pull us in through our bodies, through their smells, sights, sounds, and feelings" to establish a "spiritual connection with both the recently and the long deceased" (Davis, 2008:411). *Limelight on Rites*, however, does the opposite of this – it pushes us away. Pesa's vortex is a sensory smorgasbord of conflicting sounds, sights and smells, with visual images that unsettle and confound. This is not to imply that the work intends to prevent an experience from being had, but rather that it problematises an extra-ordinary, spiritual experience of the ritual behaviours as they happen. The audience are able to engage experientially with the performance as an event, but not with the rites themselves.

Within Pesa's vortex of behaviour, a palpable sense of emptiness and disconnection begins to emerge as these various, familiar behaviours are re-embodied, re-performed and, ultimately, reinvented through their intersection with each other. There is a pervading sense

that these rituals, although understood individually as practices intended to commune with, honour and remember the dead, ultimately fail in this intention. There is too much excess, too much noise, and too much activity for any of these behaviours to invoke the presence of the dead. Each ritual becomes, instead, empty, devoid of sacral significance and disconnected from its intended socio-cultural function. As each rite unfolds, intending to call forth a presence, all that emerges is more absence.

This absence is further invoked in the work through Pesa's particular engagement with effigy. Unlike *Rough Musick*, the effigy in *Limelight on Rites* is not the body of the artist. In this work the effigy appears in the form of the coffin and thus remains a kind of visible absence. We do not believe that there is a dead body inside the coffin but the image of the coffin, as a container for the dead, is enough to render Pesa's interaction with it as macabre and unsettling. The coffin thus creates a vacancy that the audience can potentially fill through effigy. This invitation to fill the absence of the dead is, however, simultaneously hindered by the pervading sense of emptiness created through the vortex of memory. As such, the dead remain absent from *Limelight on Rites*, and, I suggest, the conversation with the dead that effigy and ritualised embodied behaviours usually allow, does not occur.

Pesa's absent effigy in the form of the empty coffin thus also becomes a symbol and mirror in the work for the absent ancestors who seem to ignore the calls of these ritual behaviours within the performance. By erasing the corpse in this funeral ritual, Pesa's image of the empty coffin becomes a visual manifestation of Bogue's notion of the "vanishing subject" (2012:33), discussed in Chapter One. Just like the vanishing subject, Pesa's effigy effigies all those "erased bodies" and "living corpses" who "rest without histories or names" because they "were never seen as alive" (2012:33-34) by the racist history of Western thought and the Western archive. There is a pervading sense in the work that these restored ritual behaviours, distinctly altered by Western influence and capitalism, are polluted and thus incapable of engaging with the traces of the dead, who are erased and vanished from the past as well as the present.

Denied an invocation of the dead, Pesa's ludic space becomes instead a place in which the audience are asked to critically reflect on and acknowledge, experientially, the absence of the erased dead, and to consider, from within a flurry of death-related ritual, a place of

memory where rituals and their behaviours fail. Pesa's work can thus be seen as a performative expression of the death of these rituals themselves and a critique on the limitations and failures of ritual practices when irrevocably disconnected from the dead. It calls into question the role of historical rites and the complexities of their reinvention, and sometimes pollution, in contemporary, urban spaces and identities.

***Bismillah* and 'displaced transmission'**

This disruption and critique of knowledge embedded in behaviour is extended through Roach's third principle, displaced transmission, which concerns instances where historic behaviours are reinvented through their relocation and translation into different spaces, changing conditions and/or unfamiliar contexts or environments. By engaging with cultural ritual in the context of performance, whether ritualising or not, a displaced transmission of the originating behaviour inevitably occurs because the ritual behaviours, which may or may not be performative in their original context, become framed within a performance paradigm and thus in conversation with various kinds of politics relating to space, the body, representation and spectatorship. Similarly, the specific site, performance space and/or public place within which ritual behaviours are restored affects the ways in which these behaviours hold or transmit meaning because spaces have their own politics, conditions and socio-cultural symbolisms regulating acceptable and inappropriate behaviours (Machon, 2013; Pearson, 2010; Smith, 2019).

A similar navigation of performance space can be seen in Igshaan Adams' *Bismillah* where the interplay between the space (as a place of memory) and the embodied effigy (as an environment of memory) significantly alters the ways in which inherited cultural behaviours are reinvented and restored. Unlike *Rough Musick* and *Limelight on Rites*, where specific ritual behaviours are significantly altered through their embodied re-performance, Adams' *Bismillah* presents an interesting re-imagination of ritual where the behaviours themselves remain largely unchanged. Performed by the artist and his father, Amien Adams, the work involves the re-enactment of an Islamic funerary ritual where the living body of Igshaan Adams is ritualistically cleansed and wrapped for burial by his father. The ritual occurred in the basement of the 1820 Settlers Monument in Makhanda – a subterranean, crypt-like space – witnessed by a small audience of onlookers. The title *Bismillah*, meaning 'In

the name of God,' is specific to this instantiation of the work as it has also been performed, under the title *Please Remember II*, in the context of a gallery space in Cape Town in 2013.

Adams' reframing of the ritual as a performance and its relocation to a basement beneath a monument illustrates the notion of displaced transmission that Roach describes. In *Bismillah*, Adams does not reimagine the ritual behaviours directly. Amien Adams performs the ritual as it would usually be performed. His gestures and words seem rooted in memory and culture as he carries out the ritualistic cleansing and wrapping of the body. The reinvention of this embodied behaviour, I argue, emerges from the combined relocation of the ritual into a different context (that of performance) and into a different space (a basement beneath a monument). The ritual becomes changed through its engagement with a performance paradigm. I use the term 'performance' particularly in a Schechnerian sense where the repetition of the ritual constitutes "twice-behaved behaviour" (Schechner, 2002:29). In its original context the ritual would take place between a family member and the body of the deceased and can only be performed once. As Igshaan Adams is not dead and undergoes the ritual while still alive, the behaviour can occur multiple times, as his body is cleansed and wrapped and then re-cleansed and re-wrapped when the work is performed again.

Similarly, the presence of an audience as witness to a ritual that is not intended to be observed, reframes the originating ritual as a kind of performance. Traditionally the ritual is a private, intimate and strictly familial encounter shared between two bodies, one living and the other dead. Adams' reinvention of the ritual engages multiple living bodies and, although the ritual between Adams and his father is performed as though unaware of the audience, the presence of strangers surfaces a degree of voyeurism that relocates the encounter into the realm of display. While some death rituals tend to be participatory in nature and public in their performance, this is not one of them, and as such, the performance of this ritual evokes a complex atmosphere that is intensely intimate but also layered with potential ambiguity, discomfort and questioning for those who observe the work. Arguably, this is augmented for those who may be foreign to this particular cultural context where the voyeurism of the spectral gaze becomes complicated by a potential otherness and exoticism perceived within the behaviours themselves. This level of discomfort complicates the watching of the ritual and encourages an active, critical spectatorship. Western suggests that *Bismillah* is "both a private

ritual between two people ... and something broader about death – both literally and symbolically” (2017:199). In this way *Bismillah* moves beyond a mere voyeuristic display of ritual by creating an environment of ambiguity in order to create a critical, contentious space that raises questions about the proximity between the living and the dead and the nature of our own socio-culturally conditioned responses to dead bodies as abject entities.

In performing *Bismillah*, Adams becomes the effigy, positioned as a surrogate to fill the vacancy created by the absence of the original, in this case, his own dead body. Like Krastin, Adams’ effigy also serves a dualistic role. On one level Adams is able to experience, through effigy, an embodied understanding of inherited cultural behaviours normally reserved for the dead while he is still alive. Curator Ruth Simbao notes, “Making no forced attempt to ‘act dead,’ Adams calmly keeps his eyes open ... he is both dead and alive ... he is simultaneously blind and sighted” (2015:124). Adams thus consciously positions his own body, as a hybrid identity constituted from both visible and invisible racial, religious and sexual identities, in conversation with his genealogy represented through the ritual and his father. It is significant as well that Igshaan and Amien Adams, although related, “do not have a strong history of intimacy” (Western, 2017:199). In this way, Adams’ intimate engagement with his father in *Bismillah* forms a part of what Adams refers to as a “search for the authentic self” (in Western, 2017:198) within his broader body of work. As effigy Adams is able to experience, consciously and critically, an expression of cultural memory, reimagined as a means to explore the self.

On another level, Adams also effigies, for those who witness the performance, an invocation of a proximal corporeal interaction between the living and the dead. As Western observes:

Adams’s body becomes a site of projection, and therefore a *zone of contact* for the audience. It is a site to contemplate death and other dead bodies – ones they have seen and ones they have not been permitted to see because modern culture, in general, spends less time with its dead. (2017:198, emphasis in original)

This invitation for the audience to contemplate the dead by projecting their own memories or experiences of death onto Adams’ body is compounded by the second layer of displaced transmission within the work, namely its relocation to a basement beneath a national monument. The 1820 Settlers Monument stands as a memorial to the first British settlers and, like a cemetery, it lies on the periphery of the city. In witnessing Adams’ effigial performance

of death and memory, onlookers would have had to arrive at, enter through and descend beneath this designated place of memory which, through Adams' conversation with the dead, becomes an environment of memory where an embodied, experiential encounter with the dead is able to occur.

Performed in a small, dark and cold space below the ground, the environment resonates strongly with those sacred spaces one associates with death, such as the crypt, the grave and the tomb. The performance space thus seems appropriate to the context of the ritual. However, the space is also unfamiliar because it is unusual for one to witness or participate in funerary rites in spaces like these. While rituals of mourning are often characterised as "public performances of private sorrow" (Davis, 2008:419) and involve community, family and a shared expression of grief and loss, it is less common for these communal practices to occur *below* the ground. The passage of the dead from the church, temple, mosque, public square or homestead to its resting place beneath the ground is not an aspect of ritual practices commonly witnessed by those outside of the direct family. Although the basement is not an actual crypt and there are no real corpses in close proximity, the combined relocation of the ritual and the positioning of Adams' living body as effigy into this crypt-like space creates, I suggest, an environment of memory within a place of memory, in which the audience experience the work.

The ambiguity of the performance space thus further complicates the liminal nature of Adams' performance of ritual for the spectator. The space and environment, I argue, encourage the audience to effigy through the body of Adams, shifting the potentially voyeuristic role of the audience into something more, where larger questions about death, the dead and our personal embodied encounters with both of these begin to emerge. The displacing of the ritual into this particular space is thus crucial to Adams' reframing of the ritual as both displacements work together and against each other to create an environment of memory where both Adams and the audience are able to engage with and contemplate the dead through effigy. The immersive, liminal, ambiguous and uncanny environment of the monument basement creates a stronger potential for ritual *communitas* and thus manifests an encounter where Adams' body is more open and available to being effigied by those who watch and experience his re-imagination of ritual behaviour.

Ghosts disrupting the archive

As these reflections on *Rough Musick*, *Limelight on Rites* and *Bismillah*, as well as those on *Ghostdance for one*, demonstrate, whether contained within the symbolic behaviours of ritual or the genealogical corporeality of performance, the body is both a vessel and medium for those traces of the dead, erased from the written archive. These traces take many forms and can be conceived in different ways. The ghost may reside in memory as an ephemeral and embodied archive of a moment, an action, an encounter, or a person engaged with in a past time, where the affect and sensation of that memory continues to exist, in a virtual form, in physiology and imagination. The ghost might also exist beyond memory – as a forgotten trace of something so far removed and stretching so far back into a temporal past that its virtual presence haunts our gestures unknowingly, as something seemingly invisible. These ghosts underscore our rituals and behaviours quietly and unconsciously. Sometimes the ghost is buried so deep within ourselves and our archives that its trace appears vanished, where no perceivable archival remains (whether written or embodied) remain. These traces sit deep within the hinterlands of our psychologies and body memories, seeking a re-connection to the present. At other times, the ghost is found outside of ourselves, visible and knowable to us only through its capture in archival form as lifeless images of the dead, frozen in a moment and entombed in monumental buildings.

The invocation of these ghosts through embodied, effigial acts of performance, becomes a way in which to reaffirm a reconnection and conversation between the living body and the traces of the dead. By approaching this performative invocation as an anarchival process, knowledge from the past can be reconsidered, reconstituted and reimagined through a creative methodology that privileges subversion, disruption and critical reflection. There is a danger in dealing with ghosts. As many Hollywood horror films remind us, ghosts cannot always be trusted and their true intentions are not always known. In having knowledge, the ghosts of the dead also have agendas, politics, ideologies and desires and, as such, there is danger in approaching the ghost from a place of nostalgia or a melancholic desire for the past.

As a critical, questioning and imaginative approach, the anarchival becomes a way to navigate nostalgia and to disrupt knowledge from the past (and from the archive) in the pursuit and creation of new kinds of knowledge and reimagined ways of thinking. In

performing anarchivally *with* the dead we are able to challenge culture as a homogenising fixity through disruption of both the written archive and the embodied archive of cultural memory, superseding the limitations of both by unlocking, releasing and actualising, into the present, the always-speaking, always-changing voices of the dead.

Chapter consolidation

In Part 1 of this chapter I offered an encounter with the ghosts of the dead as an anarchival act, where communication with the dead through embodied practices, such as dance and ritual, becomes a way in which to reconsider the written archive's concurrent erasure and entombing of the dead. These embodied practices were then positioned as departure points for micropractices which sought to actualise traces of the dead through embodied reimagining. The process of creating *Ghostdance for one* was critically reflected upon as a locale where a performative exploration of ritual could be seen to encourage processes of active reworlding, for and with an audience. I then proposed the performance of effigy as an embodied anarchival strategy where the traces of the dead can be engaged with as a means to facilitate a dualistic rethinking, for both performer and audience, where the presence of the dead in the living body, in the present moment, becomes open to critique.

Part 2 focused exclusively on effigy, as theorised by Roach, as a performative approach to engaging with the dead through reimagined ritual acts. I suggested an anarchival potential for the disruption of knowledge, occurring in both the written and embodied archives, when effigy becomes a site for ideological questioning and the interrogation of the complex relationship between the living and the dead. Through an analysis of ritualising and ritual-like performances by Krastin, Pesa and Adams, I considered three distinct approaches to the reimagining of cultural ritual through effigy and suggested that, in each instance, a dualistic questioning of the traces of the dead and their significance in the present occurred. I also suggested that embodied effigial acts have the potential to reveal the ghosts within the archive in a manner that extends beyond establishing a connection with the dead but that also reaches towards difference – that is, to explore the nascent potential of ghostly traces to 'stir up disorder' and to elicit change in how we might think about, recognise and relate to the ghosts which continue to haunt our present.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS NEW DEPARTURES

In a recently published paper, entitled *Upsurge*, Sarah Nuttal asks: “How do we archive histories of feelings and emotions?” (2019:42). The question, Nuttal suggests, is an important one, particularly in contemporary South Africa and with the current resurgence of decolonial turbulence and questioning. For Nuttal, in historical moments of “epochal change” (2019:42), where “periods of upsurge” (2019:55) explode from within the macropolitical, the fundamental nature of this change is affective and emotional – a releasing of micropolitical visceral intensities and felt emotions. In these instances, Nuttal suggests, the archive of “facts, as well as objects like memorials and statues, seem[s] increasingly less able to speak to the temporalities of turbulence” (2019:44) because it does not preserve the virtual intensities which initiate and manifest these moments of upsurge. In line with Cvetkovich’s (2003) call for an ‘archive of feelings’, as noted earlier, Nuttal articulates the need for a methodology for the archiving of histories and “phenomenologies of emotion” (2019:43), because, she suggests, “[i]t is emotions and psychic energies that offers us important truths about where we are, and [...] enable a more accurate account of historical time” (2019:44).

As this thesis has shown, the archive of documents, objects, facts, gestures and embodied actions can be seen to hold within it another kind of alternative archive, what I (and others) have called the anarchival – an ontologically different archive of traces, of past utterances, feelings and absences, that exist in virtual form. The pivotal question, I suggest, is therefore not ‘how do we archive histories of feeling and emotion?’ but rather, *how do we access this archive comprised of the traces of feelings and emotions?* As these traces are of the body, it is through the body, I have suggested, that this other archive can be accessed and its virtual traces re-actualised. Unlike the archive, which, it has been shown, seeks to preserve history, memory and knowledge of the past *as it was*, the anarchival, conversely, is concerned with difference and alterity and the unlocking of archival traces in new, reimagined forms.

The central intention of this research has thus been to surface the specific ways in which an anarchival disruption of the archive through choreography can facilitate a re-thinking of the knowledge systems, implicit in the archive, within the broader decolonial project in South Africa. Towards this goal, this thesis has conceptualised and located the anarchival in relation to archival theory as well as pertinent theoretical and philosophical discourses. It has

critically reflected on three specific applications of anarchival research strategies located within personal practice and has theorised the disruptive effects anarchival exploration can be seen to have on established knowledge systems and ways of knowing associated with the archive. The thesis has also further analysed the complexities of these specific disruptions in the performance works of several contemporary South African artists.

In this investigation, I have conceptualised the anarchival as a disruptive embodied act that is closely aligned with both research and creation. As an act of research, the anarchival is understood as an encounter with archival traces rooted in a desire to question and to know, differently. This is a questioning of what the archive contains, what it cannot contain, what it refuses to contain and, most importantly, what it inadvertently and inevitably contains, virtually, in trace form. As a concurrent act of creation, the anarchival is also directed towards processes of taking-form and the seeking of alternative ways in which to reimagine, reach towards and re-actualise encounters with virtual traces into new manifestations grounded in the pursuit of difference.

I have argued that the anarchival act, as both research and creation, occurs through two interrelated locales. The first of these is the body, where the anarchival becomes a means through which to redress the colonial archive's imaginary, self-imposed rift between itself and the body and its knowledges. Through the body, the anarchival seeks to re-centre the archival difference of the body and its capacity to fluidly store, preserve, pass on and *change* memory and knowledge into the future. This fluidity of the body's knowing is reconsidered, through the anarchival act, not as a lack or a flaw but rather, as a necessity within the ongoing conversation between the past, present and future. The second locale of anarchival questioning, I have suggested, is the body of the self, where personal, familiar and embodied experiences, on the level of the micropolitical, become the entry points for processes of deterritorialisation and desubjectivisation. Anarchival research thus emerges from the self as a means to explore beyond what is known by encouraging unplanned arrivals and the stumbling-into other places and territories. Departing from the self, the anarchival act presents a process and methodology for the researcher to move beyond the familiar spaces of embodied experience to unlock, access and explore other microshifts and microperceptions occurring outside of, but connected to, the familiar.

In further explicating the anarchival as an embodied, creative research methodology, I identified three parameters which frame these processes and their taking-form manifestations as a means to distinguish anarchival research from other body-based, practice-led processes. Drawing from Manning's theorising of the anarchic share and Cvejić's methodology of choreographing problems, I proposed:

1. As a process, anarchival research-creation necessitates a blurring of strict delineations between process, product and reception where the taking-form of performance constitutes a continuation of processes and questionings rather than their culmination.
2. In their taking-forms, anarchival performance processes constitute their own kind of thinking which is recognised as often separate and distinct from the thinking of the performer/researcher. Performance processes thus manifest their own questions and problems which are thought-through before, during and after the performance event.
3. As thinking taking-forms, anarchival performance processes necessitate a reframing of the role of the audience within the performance event. As an embodied and experiential process, anarchival research thinks in co-composition with the bodies of the audience in modalities of thought that extend beyond the representational paradigm.

From this broad conception of the anarchival as an embodied process, I sought to provide clarity and a more detailed theorising of the anarchival through two layers of analysis and discussion. The first layer correlated directly with the specific research processes I explored in my choreographic research practice. The second layer, as a means to move beyond the self and personal application, explored the anarchival and its effects through critical analyses of selected works by several South African artists.

The first layer of this thesis provided a detailed reflection and thinking-through of a specific anarchival research strategy, described as micropractice. In these reflections I sought to consider and reveal how an anarchival micropractice might occur, what its parameters and characteristics might be and what an anarchival questioning of the archive might, in practice, *do*. Towards this goal, I surveyed the notion of the archive, its association and entanglement with colonialism, and its critical positionality within postcolonial and decolonial contexts. In Chapter One, I considered the archive as both a place and a practice connected to particular Eurocentric epistemologies, as well as poststructuralist and deconstructivist critiques of the

archive as a system of power and control. I then established the separation of the archive from the body as a colonial overhang and (after Taylor, Mbembe, wa Thiong'o and Schneider) correlated this subjugation of the body by the archive with the colonial desire to distance, dehumanise and de-future colonised peoples from their histories, memories and embodied genealogies.

From this political understanding of the archive, I established, in Chapter Two, a particular theoretical framework in which other contemporary scholars have positioned the anarchival. Drawing predominantly from Massumi and Manning, I suggested connections between the anarchival, as a creative research methodology, and strands of philosophical thinking relating to process philosophy, phenomenology and Deleuzian ontologies of being and becoming. From this framework, I clarified the anarchival as a processual and embodied gesturing towards the archive through an intentionality that is subversive, disruptive, minoritarian, and regenerative. The anarchival act, I concluded, is always directed towards the pursuit of alterity and change from within the archive through processes which re-centre the pivotal role of the body, and embodied knowledges, in engaging with the past. From this theoretical terrain I then explicated micropractice as one particular strategy for anarchival research, as proposed by Rousell and her understanding of micropractice as a process of deterritorialising, occurring at the micropolitical level of body and self.

As a means to build and develop Rousell's conception, I then explained and detailed my own thinking-through of three engagements with anarchival micropractice in the creative research processes of *Detritus for one*, *Sacre for one* and *Ghostdance for one*. Each instance illustrated how a departure point, related to the self, became deterritorialised through a research-creation encounter with virtual traces associated with different conceptions of archival remains – first object, then body, and finally, the ghost – as sites or waystations where virtual traces of the past collect and linger. The thinking-through of each micropractice, and those other formative micropractices within each micropractice, revealed some of the ways in which a creative questioning, initiated through the body, was able to actualise archival traces, differently, as alternative manifestations or iterations.

Emerging from this thinking-through of micropractice, I then suggested various ways in which objects, bodies and ghosts become both sources for, *and* initiators of, lines of flight.

In each micropractice, it was shown how virtual traces become changed through co-composition with the unique materialities, conditions and/or opportunities presented by the specific encounter with the body. I also suggested that each instance of micropractice points to and surfaces a re-balancing of the proverbial scale between subjects and objects, past gestures and their reiteration in the present, and between spectres and the bodies of the living.

In the second layer of this discussion I provided a critical consideration of how anarchival acts can be seen to disrupt hegemonic forms of knowledge or initiate alternative kinds of thinking, rooted in an understanding of performance, and anarchival performance processes specifically, as having a capacity to think in-and-of themselves. I first offered affect, in Chapter Three, as an alternative and complementary paradigm – a kind of thinking which recognises the body (before conscious or cognitive thought) as a medium through which thinking and knowing occurs. I suggested that the engaging with affect necessitates a rupturing of the subject-object divide as a means to position bodies and objects in a common, open field in which to reconsider the possibilities of how we think about the experience of ‘being in the world’ and our encounters with nonhuman, non-living organisms. I analysed two works by Steven Cohen and Dineo Seshee Bopape as a means to further illustrate how, in a practical sense, this alternative thinking through affect might occur. I noted how affect is encouraged through the disruption of the subject-object divide through abjection, in Cohen’s work, and then, from a different approach, through the embracing of the black body as an object as a resistant strategy for the reimagining of the past, in Bopape’s work.

I then offered ‘reaching (back) toward’ as a minor gesture relating to touch – where, after Manning, touch is conceived as an embodied intentionality to know differently. I proposed that reaching back to past bodies, anarchivally, through reiterative gesture and re-enactment, creates unique ecologies of feeling and bodily sensation, where the interval between past and present bodies becomes a space of co-composition. In these intervals, I argued, the past and the present coalesce into new forms and, through this, reveal the relationalities between past and present thereby opening a space in which both the similarities and differences of now and then can be critiqued. I provided an analysis of both works comprising Nelisiwe Xaba’s *The Venus* through the lens of touch and the minor gesture and suggested that in reaching (back) to touch Sarah Baartman’s body, Xaba’s works reveal

and question the lingering similarities that continue to haunt black African female bodies in the present. I also argued that, in reaching back, Xaba creates two distinct ecologies with her audience, which enable her touching of Baartman to initiate a rethinking of the relationship between the past and the present and the lingering ways in which distant discourses and ideologies continue (often invisibly) to haunt bodies in the present and, potentially, those in the future.

In Chapter Five I offered effigy as a third subversive, critical strategy for the questioning of knowledge and memory, specifically through communication with the ghosts of the dead. I proposed that the performer-as-effigy is able to reimagine memory through the reinventing of cultural ritual and thus facilitate dual layers of anarchival questioning. I clarified this dual questioning as occurring on two levels: where the performer, through ritualising engagement with the dead, can question the relationality of the dead, as well as their knowledges, ideologies and discourses, to their own present experience while simultaneously facilitating an altogether different communication with the dead for an audience through ritual *communitas*, processes of reworlding and the effigy's role as surrogate for past absences. Using principles for the reimagining of memory (offered by Roach), I analysed three performance works by Gavin Krastin, Sello Pesa and Igshaan Adams, where the performance of effigy could be seen to initiate a questioning of the relevance, significance and role cultural rituals relating to the dead play in the present. In each work, I argued, the exploration of the ghost, through effigy, represents a rethinking of how these artists situate themselves in relation to their dead – and in so doing, reaffirms the vital role played by the body as both a place *and* environment of memory, and thus, a foil to the segregationist positioning of the dead and their ghosts which the archive both seeks and reproduces.

While the micropractices and analyses explored in the two layers of this thesis have, for the sake of structure and flow, been separated and approached in relative isolation, the reader would have noticed various points of intersection, convergence, divergence and entanglement. In exploring the object as an anarchival source, the body and the ghost inevitably intercede. In accessing the body's traces, objects and ghosts are also potentially engaged. In communing with the traces of the dead, the body and objects similarly become complicit in anarchival ways. These cross-overs, overlappings and entanglements are equally evident in the performance works I analyse, where objects, bodies and ghosts often combine

in certain works or are engaged with simultaneously or in relation to each other. While I acknowledge these seepages and crossovers, I would prefer not to make these explicit, but rather let these linger, in the gaps, silences and crevices of this thesis, as points for further consideration and thinking, in another time, or in another place.

The anarchival is, by necessity, a multiplicity and its various approaches, strategies and possibilities are equally innumerable, endlessly imaginable and always entangled with each other. My research into anarchival dances and anarchival bodies, as explicated here, thus presents a single instance of a possible conceiving of this encounter – approached through the self and through my body and its inculcation in numerous histories, ideologies, genealogies and epistemologies. This focus on the body and the self also constitutes, I suggest, the core value and contribution of this study. This investigation into the anarchival and the many approaches to reimagining archival traces, explicated from a dualistic and oscillating perspective that is both self-reflexive and intuitive as well as analytical and interpretivist, provides a detailed conceptualising of anarchival disruption that is theoretical and conceptual while still, importantly, rooted in *doing*. As such, this thesis contributes to the burgeoning field of performance-philosophy and adds a valuable layer to the consideration of the specific and practical ways in which bodies and performances, in and of themselves, think, philosophise and ponder.

Similarly, while the specific strategies explored here are not intended to serve as set prototypes or models for choreographic engagements with the archive, the careful framing of the self within these processes as a necessary part of territories for departure, means that any potentially similar engagements with these strategies would likely surface markedly dissimilar lines of flight and thus the discovery of other, alternative territories. For artists and/or researchers pursuing archival research through creative practice and through the body, this thesis and the strategies it explores provide valuable insight, guidance and thorough theoretical framings through which other practitioners may deepen their own understanding of practices with which they might already be engaging in their individual practices.

In the field of archive studies, in particular, this embodied approach to archival questioning, located in relation to the self and processes of creation, has significant potential value as an alternative way in which to approach the charged and contentious territory of the

colonial archive. As a strategy, I have suggested, the anarchival has particular value for a decolonial archival praxis through its ability to significantly disrupt, subvert, interrupt and reimagine archival theory and practice, by opening up the archive, making it accessible through other ways of knowing and different kinds of thinking with, through and about the past. The inclusion of the audience and their framing as co-composers within anarchival choreographic performances, as this thesis has demonstrated, further emphasises the decolonial potential of this kind of research methodology. By performing and sharing anarchival research processes within an inclusive and responsive spectatorship, anarchival performances seek to ensure that the questioning of the archive and its knowledges, enacted through the body and the self, also has significance, impact and affect, for those who witness and participate.

What is most apparent from the many thinking-throughs of these processes and practices is that there is no end point to anarchival questioning. There is no point of arrival, as each departure to a new territory becomes another place from which one could depart again. As such the anarchival is, as Massumi notes, “always-in-germ” (2011:7) – a process which, like a becoming, never seeks to become, but remains, constantly in a state of flux, always with the potential for further disruption. When the anarchival becomes, it becomes an archive and, as such, presents a new document, another object, another body from which to begin other, new anarchival processes. In a similar way, decoloniality and the decolonising of the archive are also constant and ongoing processes. There is no point at which the decolonial arrives or where the archive can forever sever its inculcation in colonial histories and violences. Both the anarchival and the decolonial are acts of disruption, and as such, disrupt constantly. This is not, to borrow from Fleishman, “a simple revolution” but rather “an ongoing interruption” (2009:133).

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ADDENDUM: LIST OF PERFORMANCES CITED BY TITLE⁹⁹

19 Born 76 Rebels. 2013. [Creator] Mamela Nyamza. [Cast] Mamela Nyamza and Faniswa Yisa. [Place]. Festival d'Avignon: Avignon, France. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRgrrrnBM0o>

About Kazuo Ohno. 2016. [Creator] Takao Kawaguchi (after Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno). [Cast]. Takao Kawaguchi. [Place] The Dance ga Mitai! Festival: Tokyo, Japan. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUncUUP2sRg> (2016 performance at Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, USA)

Admiring La Argentina. 1977. [Creators] Tatsumi Hijikata (director) and Kazuo Ohno (choreographer). [Cast] Kazuo Ohno. [Place]. Daiichi Seimei Hall: Tokyo, Japan. Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rk5_Kc2BDQg

Barena. 2000. [Creator] Vincent Mantsoe. [Cast] Vincent Mantsoe. [Place]. Dance Umbrella: Johannesburg, South Africa.

Bismillah. 2014. [Creator] Igshaan Adams. [Cast] Igshaan Adams and Amien Adams. [Place]. National Arts Festival: Makhanda, South Africa. Available: <https://vimeo.com/202625975>

Broken Bird. 2001. [Creator] Elu. [Cast] Elu. [Place]. Public intervention at inner-city intercession: Johannesburg, South Africa. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Zt09Z2mLVw> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoUbGozqpb8>

Bruising. 2014. [Creator] Nicola Elliott. [Cast]. Vishanthi Arumugam, Athena Mazarakis, Alan Parker and Jori Snell. [Place] National Arts Festival: Makhanda, South Africa. Available: <https://vimeo.com/125567650>

Coq/Cock. 2013. [Creator] Steven Cohen. [Cast] Steven Cohen. [Place] Public intervention at Place du Trocadéro: Paris, France. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsx9gtQM8f8>

De-Apart-Hate. 2016. [Creator] Mamela Nyamza. [Cast] Mamela Nyamza and Mihlali Gwatyu. [Place] Cape Town Fringe: Cape Town, South Africa. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U10UUYZ8XyQ> (2017 performance at Afrovibes, Netherlands).

Der Tod. 1929. [Creator] Valeska Gert. [Cast]. Valeska Gert. [Place]. Weimar, Germany.

⁹⁹ All dates and places refer to the performance's premiere (unless otherwise indicated). The hyperlink may refer to the same performance but at a later date or different location. All hyperlinks were correct and working at the date of submission.

- Detritus*. 2014. [Creator] Alan Parker. [Cast] Richard Antrobus, Indalo Stofile and Madele Vermaak. [Place] Theatre Arts Admin Collective: Cape Town South Africa.
- Detritus for One*. 2015. [Creator] Alan Parker. [Cast] Alan Parker. [Place] National Arts Festival: Makhanda, South Africa. Available: <https://vimeo.com/379442785>
- Discharge*. 2012. [Creators] Gavin Krastin (theatre-maker), Alan Parker (choreographer) and Rat Western (digital artist). [Cast] Gavin Krastin, Alan Parker, Rat Western and members of the First Physical Theatre Company. [Place] National Arts Festival: Makhanda, South Africa. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLvebJBSukU>
- Fake it!* 2007. [Creator] Janez Janša. [Cast] Various. [Place] Ljubljana, Slovenia. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdugTztGW4o>
- Fragile*. 2012. [Creator] Nicola Elliott. [Cast] Louise Elliott, Lucy Kruger, Thabiso Pule and Jori Snell. [Place] Theatre Arts Admin Collective: Cape Town, South Africa. Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fq_-tZaUjU8
- Ghostdance for one*. 2017. [Creator] Alan Parker. [Cast] Alan Parker. [Place]. ICA Live Art Festival: Cape Town South Africa. Available: <https://vimeo.com/380655270> (2017 performance at National Arts Festival, Makhanda).
- Giselle*. 1841. [Creators] Jean Coralli, Jules Perrot and Marius Petipa (choreography), Adolphe Adam (score), Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges and Théophile Gautier (libretto). [Cast] Ballet du Théâtre de l'Académie Royale de Musique (Paris Opera Ballet). [Place] Salle Le Peletier: Paris, France. Available: <http://radchenko-ballet.com/en/giselle/> (performance by Russian National Ballet S.Radchenko).
- Gula*. 1993. [Creator] Vincent Mantsoe. [Cast] Vincent Mantsoe. [Place] Dance Umbrella: Johannesburg, South Africa. Available: <https://www.numeridanse.tv/en/dance-videotheque/gula?s>
- Hatched*. 2009. [Creator] Mamela Nyamza, assisted by Hannah Lowenthal. [Cast] Mamela Nyamza, Amkele Nyamza. [Place] New Dance Festival: Johannesburg, South Africa. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nid-OfN9PAA> (2010 performance at National Arts Festival, Makhanda).
- I wouldn't be seen dead in that!* 2013. [Creator] Steven Cohen. [Cast] Steven Cohen and Ballet Antlantique/Régine Chopinot. [Place] Chapelle Fromentin: La Rochelle, France.
- Isingqala*. 2011. [Creator] Mamela Nyamza, assisted by Hannah Lowenthal. [Cast] Mamela Nyamza. [Place] National Arts Festival: Makhanda, South Africa. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlwdNarnKp0>
- Jew*. 1998. [Creator] Steven Cohen. [Cast] Steven Cohen. [Place] Public intervention at the Johannesburg Zoo: Johannesburg, South Africa.

- L'après-midi d'un faune*. 1912. [Creator] Vaslav Nijinsky. [Cast] Ballets Russes. [Place] Théâtre du Châtelet: Paris, France. Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0aNjMRGL_E
- L'après-midi d'un foehn*. 2008. [Creator] Phia Ménard. [Cast] Jean-Louis Ouvrard. [Score] Ivan Roussel (after Debussy). [Place] Natural History Museum of Nantes: Nantes, France. Available: <https://vimeo.com/84625116>
- Lamentation*. 1930. [Creator] Martha Graham. [Cast] Martha Graham. [Place] Maxine Elliot's Theatre, New York, USA. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-lcFwPJUXQ>
- Lamentation/Martha@*. 1996. [Creator] Richard Move, after Martha Graham. [Cast] Richard Move. [Place] Mother Cabaret, New York, USA. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioH380u20tk> (2008 interview with Move with footage of performance at 00.27).
- Le Sacre du Printemps*. 1913. [Creators] Vaslav Nijinsky (choreography), Igor Stravinsky (score), Nicholas Roerich (design and libretto). [Cast] Ballets Russes. [Place] Théâtre des Champs-Élysées: Paris, France.
- Le Sacre du Printemps*. 1987. [Creators] Milicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer, reconstruction after Nijinsky. [Cast] Joffery Ballet. [Place] Los Angeles, United States of America. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jo4sf2wT0wU>
- Le Sacre du Printemps*. 1959. [Creator] Maurice Béjart. [Cast] Tania Bari, Germinal Casado, Patrick Belda. [Place] Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie: Brussels, Belgium. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XedawBHB-uc>
- Le Sacre du Printemps/Das Frühlingsopfer*. 1975. [Creator] Pina Bausch. [Cast] Tanzteater Wuppertal. [Place] Opera House: Wuppertal, Germany. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJd05A297us>
- Le Sacre du Printemps*. 2001. [Creator] Angelin Preljocaj. [Cast] Ballet Preljocaj. [Place] Théâtre de la Ville: Paris, France. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-UMLvI7ZkA0>
- Le Sacre du Printemps*. 2007. [Creator] Xavier Le Roy. [Cast] Xavier Le Roy. [Place] Les Subsistances: Lyon, France. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xTlzAN13SA>
- Leftover Sacre*. 2013. [Creator] Alan Parker. [Cast]. Joni Barnard, Nomcebisi Moyikwa and Alan Parker. [Place] The Dance Space: Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Limelight on Rites*. 2014. [Creator] Sello Pesa. [Cast] Ntsoana Contemporary Dance Theatre. [Place]. ICA Live Art Festival: Cape Town South Africa. (A different version, with the same title, premiered at The Goethe-Institut, Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2010).

- Limping into the African Renaissance*. 1999. [Creator] Steven Cohen. [Cast] Steven Cohen and at times with Elu and Nomsa Dlamini. [Place] Traditional homestead: eSigangeni, Swaziland.
- Miss Thandi*. 2002. [Creator] Gregory Maqoma. [Cast] Gregory Maqoma. [Place] Dance Umbrella: Johannesburg, South Africa. Available: <https://www.numeridanse.tv/videotheque-danse/miss-thandi?s>
- Munk/Punk*. 2004. [Creator]. Elu. [Cast]. Elu. [Place]. Ballet Antlantique: La Rochelle, France. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhrxRoc4HJE> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DC1yq36glAE>
- My Mother*. 1981. [Creator] Kazuo Ohno. [Cast]. Kazuo Ohno [Place]. Daiichi Seimei Hall: Tokyo, Japan. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-roXj8UBIA>
- One mysterious Thing, said e.e. cummings*. 1996. [Creator] Vera Mantero. [Cast] Vera Mantero. [Place] Theatre Culturgest: Lisbon, Portugal. Available: <https://www.numeridanse.tv/en/dance-videotheque/one-mysterious-thing-said-ee-cummings>
- Please Remember II*. 2013. [Creator] Igshaan Adams. [Cast] Igshaan Adams and Amien Adams. [Place]. Michaelis Galleries: Cape Town, South Africa
- Proximity: loss and having*. 2011. [Creator] Nicola Elliott. [Cast] Thando Doni, Neil Luyt and Brink Scholtz. [Place] Dance Umbrella: Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Put your heart under your feet...and walk!/To Elu*. 2017. [Creator] Steven Cohen. [Cast] Steven Cohen. [Place] Montpellier Danse: Montpellier, France. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6JSRkAv1SN8>
- Retrospective – Altered Daily*. 2011. [Creator] Alan Parker. [Cast] Alan Parker and Gavin Krastin [Place]. Dance Umbrella: Johannesburg, South Africa. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwLcHgwB1ho>
- RoS Indexical*. 2007. [Creatore] Yvonne Rainer. [Cast] Emily Coates, Sally Silvers, Pat Catterson and Patricia Hoffbauer. [Place] Performa 07: New York, United States of America. Available: <https://vimeo.com/87618541>
- Rough Musick*. 2013. [Creator] Gavin Krastin. [Cast] Gavin Krastin, Alan Parker and Lauren Fletcher. [Place]. National Arts Festival: Makhanda, South Africa. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iiO6ztc85vc> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJ1l1B6cjU8>
- Sa koša ke lerole*. 2017. [Creator] Dineo Seshee Bopape. [Cast] No cast. [Place] National Arts Festival: Makhanda, South Africa.

- Sacre for One*. 2016. [Creator] Alan Parker. [Cast] Alan Parker. [Place]. National Arts Festival: Makhanda, South Africa. Available: <https://vimeo.com/379558694> (2016 performance at Cape Town Fringe, Cape Town).
- Sakhozi says NON to the Venus*. 2008. [Creators] Nelisiwe Xaba (choreographer), Toni Morkel (director) and Mocke J van Veuren (digital artist). [Cast] Nelisiwe Xaba. [Place]. Musée du Quai Branly: Paris, France. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ob1BHfgJXIA>
- Swan Lake*. 1895. [Creators] Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov (choreographers), Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (composer). [Cast] Imperial Ballet. [Place] Mariinsky Theatre: St. Petersburg, Russia. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rJob7y6Ncs> (1990 performance by Kirov Ballet).
- Taste*. 1999. [Creator] Steven Cohen. [Cast]. Steven Cohen. [Place] Public intervention at University of Cape Town campus canteens: Cape Town, South Africa. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HS3zz3IBL-U> (from 02:22).
- The Cradle of Humankind*. 2011. [Creator] Steven Cohen. [Cast]. Steven Cohen and Nomsa Dlamini. [Place]. Festival les Anticodes: Brest, France. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2Hy3atqn-l>
- The eclipse will not be visible to the naked eye*. 2010. [Creator] Dineo Seshee Bopape. [Cast]. No cast. [Place]. Michael Stevenson Gallery: Cape Town, South Africa.
- The Green Table*. 1932. [Creator] Kurt Jooss. [Cast]. Jooss Ballet/Folkwang Tanzbuhne. [Place] Concours International de Chorégraphie: Paris, France. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxJslTxObU4> (1967 reconstruction by the Joffrey Ballet, Chicago)
- The sky remains the same*. 2008 (ongoing). [Creator] Julie Tolentino. [Cast] Julie Tolentino and various. [Places] Various. Available: <https://vimeo.com/33845331> (Tolentino's 2011 archiving of Ron Athey - *RESONATE/OBLITERATE*)
- They look at me and that's all they think*. 2006. [Creator] Nelisiwe Xaba. [Cast] Nelisiwe Xaba. [Place] Dance Umbrella: Johannesburg, South Africa. Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5cl0ZJ_96U and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VDFIbCwK_k
- Totenmal*. 1929. [Creator] Mary Wigman. [Cast] Mary Wigman and Wigman-Gruppe. [Place] Dresden, Weimar Germany. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KyNkEm-cFVk> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axMyLhH1ySY>
- Totentanz*. 1926. [Creator] Mary Wigman. [Cast] Mary Wigman and Wigman-Gruppe. [Place]. Dresden, Weimar Germany.

Transports Exceptionnels. 2005. [Creator] Dominique Boivin. [Cast] Philippe Priasso. [Place]. Val de Reuil, France. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EH2w6uR84OE> (2007 performance at the London Dance Umbrella).

Trio A/The Mind is a Muscle. 1966. [Creator] Yvonne Rainer. [Cast] David Gordon, Steve Paxton and Yvonne Rainer. [Place] Judson Church: New York, United States of America. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHqIMFDbQI> (1978 recording by Yvonne Rainer).

Young people, old voices. 2002. [Creator] Raimund Hoghe. [Cast] Lorenzo De Brabandere, Wouter Bouchez, Sarah Késenne, Kristin Rogghe, Pascale Cuggia, Ezra Eeman, Nicolas Marie, Koen De Preter, Carla Langenbick, Dorien Bastiaensen, Rocio Alondra Antognoni, Lieven Dousselaere and Raimund Hoghe. [Place]. Kaaitheater: Brussels, Belgium. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpIGgEY3HJU>